Daily Report

Latin America

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Foreign Ministers Hold Meeting on EC Tax on Bananas

PA0304194993 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 3 Apr 93 p 1

[Report by Irene Hernandez G.]

[Text] The foreign ministers of Central America, Colombia, Ecuador, and Panama on 2 April in Panama City held a high-level meeting to reaffirm the banana-exporting countries' position against the new tax system the EC has imposed on this fruit.

The foreign ministers rejected the EC measure because it violates GATT principles and because it will have grave consequences for the economies and on the workers of the countries affected by it. The foreign ministers' declaration was issued during a joint meeting at the Atlapa Convention Center.

The foreign ministers of Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama discussed matters related to the forthcoming OAS meeting, during which the new secretary general of this organization will be elected.

These ministers discussed agreements on natural disasters and the environment as well as Central America's relations with Asian countries, the Caribbean, Mexico, and the Group of Three, comprised of Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela.

The Central American foreign ministers also discussed human rights, immigration, trade, technological aid, energy, transportation, and communications, among other matters.

Cuba

Castro Remarks on New Foreign Minister, Bids Farewell to Alarcon

FL0204170693 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0160 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Speech by President Fidel Castro given at the Ministry of Foreign Relations in Havana on 1 April—recorded]

[Text] Today, Commander in Chief Fidel Castro, president of the Councils of State and Ministers, attended the hail and farewell ceremony to officially present the new foreign minister, Roberto Robaina Gonzalez, and send off the former one, Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada.

[Begin Castro recording] [applause, audience chants: "Fidel"] The fact of such a brilliant foreign minister as Alarcon's having to leave the position to occupy another position of great responsibility must have shaken up the ministry. Well, although it was difficult to find a new foreign minister, it was also quite difficult to find a president for the National Assembly, after the electoral process we had, and when we really needed someone who would symbolize that entire process. It was like a symbol of the role of the National Assembly, of its importance, of the nature of the electoral process that we have just had. I think Alarcon's presence in the National Assembly was the culminating point of that entire process. You have already seen with what unanimity Alarcon's candidacy was received within the National Assembly and how all the deputies present voted for him unanimously and with what unanimity his election was received by the population.

Well, we had solved a very important problem. We had solved the problem of the National Assembly. We still had to solve, however, the problem of the Ministry of Foreign Relations. A vacancy had occurred. How do we fill that vacancy?

Well, I imagine that if there had been a consultation process, we would have had thousands of candidates, because every mind harbors its own idea of who could be foreign minister, what so-and-so would be like. We were interested in people's opinion. We were interested in all that. We were interested, of course, in how a new minister was going to be received at the Foreign Ministry, regardless of who he might be. But possibly few people imagined that that new minister could be Robertico, because of the duties he was carrying out in the youth movement; because of the important role the youth movement plays; because he is not a Foreign Ministry career professional; because he is young; because he does not have experience in these matters. Thus, few people were expecting Robaina to be chosen for this Foreign Ministry position.

I have since racked my brain—and before, too, of course—thinking about who else could have been received unanimously here and by public opinion as well. And I really cannot come up with anyone. But, well, perhaps some might have been received with a greater or lesser consensus. I am sure no one would have aroused as much controversy as Robertico. Of that I am sure! [audience laughter]

Well, for one reason or another—either because he came from the organization, or because he was an ambassador, or because he was older, or had more overall experience in the Revolution, or whatever....[changes thought] But such a person would not have aroused as much passion, both in favor of and against, as Robertico has aroused.

I have listened to opinions. We have tried to get people's opinions. One of the things that came up most often was the matter of experience. That he did not have experience in this field, in this sphere. Some people argued that he does not speak foreign languages. In short, there were different ideas about the matter—among the revolutionary ranks, I mean. I am not talking about....[rephrases] When I talk about divided opinions and different views, I am talking about the revolutionary ranks.

Now, those concerns were very well-founded. They were justified. They were understandable, as much those who talked about experience as those who worried about how Robertico was going to dress the day he had to go to, oh, I do not know, the United Nations, let us say. [audience laughter] The United Nations is a very respectable place, but I imagine that the day I showed up there in one of these guerrilla uniforms [audience laughter]—and it is the uniform I have used all my life—it was kind of sensational. Some people might have thought it was not very diplomatic.

I remember that Krushchev actually took off a shoe, there at the United Nations, [audience laughter] to get people's attention. They were saying I do not know what and he wanted to protest; so he beat on the table with his shoe, there at the United Nations. That was, well, a sort of an Olympic record. [audience laughter]

Many such things have occurred at the United Nations.

But what I am trying to say is that the concerns of the revolutionary comrades from diverse spheres were worthy of being taken into account, and worthy of being respected, because they were well-founded concerns. They were based on something. Moreover, they also showed the great importance everyone places on the Ministry of Foreign Relations, the great importance everyone places on the position of foreign minister. Perhaps another ministry....[rephrases] with difficulty in another ministry....[changes thought] Because I know of cases in which, to a different ministry, some very competent but new and unknown comrade has come and yet that has not given rise to comments. People have read the file in the paper; and such cases have not elicited passions the way Robertico's appointment has.

That is to say that....[rephrases] This meant that the population in general, the revolutionary comrades, consider this position very important; that they are concerned about it, that they have an opinion regarding it, that it is a matter of the greatest interest. Some asked us

if we in the Politburo and in the Council of State were crazy, for having made such a decision.

I do hope, Robertico, that that idea that we might be crazy will not turn out to be justified! [audience laughter] But, well, in any case, were this to turn out to be the case, it would at least be a collective craziness. [audience laughter] A very well-thought out and well-analyzed craziness, thought out and analyzed on the basis of a whole series of circumstances of a political and practical nature, and analyzing the variants. And each was discussed, one by one, with all the....[rephrases] with many comrades.

I must say that the first two comrades who were asked for their opinion were Jose Ramon Balaguer and Ricardo Alarcon. They happened to be together and we even asked them what they thought and they began to work out theories [audience laughter] and mention names in an attempt to find a solution to the difficult problem of choosing a minister who could replace Alarcon. And when the name of Roberto Robaina was mentioned, they were speechless [se quedaron asi] [audience laughter]. And I am going to tell you that, both of them, both—because, in the first place, we wanted to have their opinion first of all—really liked the idea a great deal. They thought about it and they did indeed think about it! They expounded on the matter and I think all the other comrades on the Politburo who were consulted about the idea had the same opinion.

We know the kind of work Robertico has done when he has had to travel abroad, when he has had to talk to political figures and face big news conferences. We have seen his talent for and brilliance at tackling difficult issues and responding to difficult questions. Those are unquestionably characteristics required in a foreign minister, as is a deep political and revolutionary conviction! Those are real characteristics of Comrade Robaina, and those of us who know him, who have talked with (?him) many times, can attest to that.

Discipline. When I talked to Robertico alone one day to ask him his opinion about this—an occasion on which the first to be surprised, and the person most surprised, was himself....[changes thought] I also remember the time I talked to Robertico to give him a mission in Angola, as a political cadre there at a decisive moment in that war, when our troops were....[rephrases] when our troops were advancing toward the south, preparing for a tremendous counterattack that would solve the famous problem of Cuito Cuanavale, a great distance from there; that would force the enemy to withdraw from Angola. And that operation, in which 40,000 men were committed, and where important political work needed to be done with the young cadres....[changes thought] We asked the youth movement to send a number of cadres there, to be sort of instructors, or political officers, or whatever you wish to call them—to do political work with the troops, a thing so essential at a moment as decisive as that!

And I remember Robertico's answer, and the answer of the....[rephrases] as a youth cadre. I remember the enthusiasm, the discipline, the determination with which, in a matter of days, they got ready and marched off to fulfill that mission.

I have not spoken with Robertico only when it has been a matter of promotions to constant tasks, (?matters) of work to be done here in the country or other things. I have also spoken to him at moments such as that one, in which the lives of so many men were at stake and there was political work to be done. It is impossible for me to think that a person who has sufficient qualities to accomplish political work among young combatants in a war could fail to also have the political ability to do the job in the middle of this war that the diplomatic battle that our country is having to wage in all spheres against the most powerful empire on earth and in history constitutes.

We no longer had Alarcon here. Alarcon was undoubtedly the perfect foreign minister for us. Nevertheless, we had to find someone capable of developing the experience, the knowledge, the characteristics of Alarcon. Also-....[rephrases] Well, we needed someone young. We have many cadres who are older but, well, would you be willing to have us send you a minister who is already 60, 65, or 70 years old? [audience answers: "No!"] It is different if we come from way back, right? [audience laughter, applause]

If someone is going to start out new, it is different. It is better for him to be young [audience laughter] and learn. It is the young who are sent to study at the university. One no longer sends people 50 or 60 years old, or even people 45. One sends younger people because anyone seeing someone beginning a university career at age 45 years would say: What's with you, sir? [audience laughter] Can you not do something else? Why do they not send some young man there, to begin the university career!

They do not send....[changes thought] Well, when one is going to begin—in this field, specifically—to acquire experience that must be acquired, a young person is needed. Youth is indispensable, in diplomacy as in war.

Regarding youth, I was commenting yesterday at the Politburo meeting that had we not been the age we were when it happened, we would not have been able to climb the Turquino mountain range when we did, carrying 70-pound loads on our shoulders. And there is something else that must be taken into account: that the work of the Foreign Ministry, or the nation's foreign policy, is not the job of a single man. It is the job of a team, of a work group. Furthermore, it is the job of the Communist Party of Cuba [PCC], the Cuban Government, and the people of Cuba. As Alarcon used to say: Foreign policy is everyone's job. All of us have to conduct foreign policy. In fact, Alarcon himself, from within the National Assembly, has to conduct a great deal of foreign policy, through all these commissions and committees for relations with all the legislatures, through the legislatures of the world, and through the governments, and all that.

There were also other factors. This ministry is important internationally. And we also took into account the fact that Comrade Robaina has been a member of the Politburo for some time now. He is also a member of the Council of State. He has an important standing within the Revolution and within the PCC. It was also necessary for the comrade who replaced Alarcon to have as high a standing as possible, the greatest possible access to all sectors and all levels. That was very important. If we could just bring that into line with Robertico's energy, initiative, and creativity, we would be on our way to fashioning an idea of who....[rephrases] of a minister that....[rephrases] of who might be able to do that job—that [word or words indistinct] begin gathering all these characteristics. And I think, am convinced—as were all the rest of the comrades who expressed their opinion on this matter—that Robertico possesses all the qualifications to carry out these duties. And it is very good for him to feel committed to the revolution, to the PCC, to the Cuban people, to those who expressed an opinion in favor, and also to those who expressed an opinion against. He has to work very hard so that those who held a different opinion will one day have to say: Well, I must say that, indeed, once accepted, he is doing a good job. As I myself am sure he is going to do. [applause] [end recording]

New Foreign Minister Views Appointment

FL0204215093 Havana Tele Rebelde Network in Spanish 0230 GMT 1 Apr 93

[Interview with Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina by Hector Rodriguez, Pedro Martinez Piret, and Rosalia Arnaez on the "This Very Day" program—live]

[Passage omitted]

[Arnaez] Therefore, there has been a promotion of your own staff within the Union of Young Communists [UJC].

[Robaina] That is it. It is a promotion for which we have been preparing. I do not have any doubt that they can uphold ....[changes thought] I believe that right now they have a more important challenge ahead. The challenge is more than repeating what was already done. I believe that they all believe that they have to do what corresponds to this moment. In this spirit we have been trained. We, ourselves, worked under the principle that you do not do 1992's work in 1993, nor 1991's work in 1992. I believe that the great challenge facing the youth movement is to do what corresponds to its own time. Personally, I do not have a shadow of a doubt that we can tell those girls you met and all those to whom we can talk through this medium, that the youth movement will not only continue its work but will surpass it and respond to the tasks of this period. Of this I am confident.

[Martinez] I believe this is a marvelous opportunity for us to talk to Robaina today. We have to give him thanks for the fact that he is meeting with us before meeting with the diplomatic corps. When will this take place?

[Robaina] In a few hours. Tomorrow [1 April] at noon, I will meet with the diplomatic corps.

[Martinez] This means that we are giving the first news on this. As Hector would say: The brand new foreign minister has already given us two scoops in this program. I believe there are many things to talk about. Rosalia mentioned some issues. I also have some things before tackling other issues.

Nunez Rodriguez [sportscaster] was just here and I believe he also gave us another scoop. A letter he wrote to the new foreign minister. I feel I am authorized to make it public. This is a form of continuity from the previous segment in this program. It is signed by Enrique Nunez Rodriguez. It reads: To Comrade Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina. Robertico: I do not believe I will be telling you anything new by affirming that I was highly surprised by your appointment to the Foreign Ministry [Minrex] post. At first it was as if I had been told that I was to manage the Centrales team in the next season; later, on second thought, I told myself: Why not? If I love my province of origin and know something about baseball, the rest is learned along the way. I know that you love your revolution and that what you are going to defend in the diplomatic arena is what you have successfully defended in the UJC. On the other hand, I believe your appointment is a reward for the honesty of your principles and this always is good, particularly for Cuba, which is what is important. Therefore, receive a strong hug from Enrique Nunez Rodriguez.

Like everything he does, it has humor but also a deeper content. I believe it reflects what Rosalia mentioned and we talked about yesterday because several things are combined. First, there is the concern about the UJC leadership. Second, is the exceptional fact that 37-year-old Roberto Robaina Gonzalez is replacing highly experienced Foreign Minister Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada who was promoted to preside the National Assembly. There is not doubt that Alarcon's full diplomatic career carries some weight particularly because we have enemies that are constantly attempting to misinform, destroy, demoralize, and divide. They even make the most ridiculous statements. Anyone who reads the resumes of all the foreign ministers in the world could reach many conclusions. Many of them do not have a background as unquestionable as Robaina's is as a political leader and as a highly experienced professional who also has international experience. But we are not to waste time talking about other foreign ministers while we have Cuba's minister before us, even before presenting his credentials.

There has been a huge international repercussion. From Radio Havana Cuba, which keeps us in almost daily contact with Radio Oleiros, we received a fax which I also want to read before asking Robaina if he has received other messages expanding on GRANMA's article on this repercussion. This fax is from a friend we have had on this program. It is signed by (Angel Garcia Ciobani), the major of Oleiros in the Spanish province of Coruna. It reads: My dear friend and Comrade Roberto

Robaina. I have been told the great news regarding your appointment as Cuba's foreign minister. First of all, I want to express the great happiness this makes me feel. Second, I want to wish you all kind of successes in your new job, successes that will surely come for the benefit of Cuba and the Revolution because you are the person appropriate for this post.

Are there other messages?

[Robaina] Yes. I believe that, of course, and it is personally difficult for me to talk about it. We have received many messages in the last few days and hours expressing congratulations and also surprise. I believe that we all share the surprise of that good friend and teacher Nunez Rodriguez. I am also surprised. I believe that there is a mix of happiness, delight, and surprise, and I could add that we have received messages of congratulation from Manuel Fraga, the president of the Galician Government, senators from many countries, youth organizations, solidarity groups, Mexico, and many other places. I believe that it is fair to add that not all are just simple congratulations. I believe, and this is what Rosalia asked, as well as Nunez pondered about managing a baseball team, and the note that Hector read expresses. I am among those who justifiably have doubts on my experience. I am among the people who are surprised.

I want to say about my experience, which is regularly mentioned, that this was my first concern when I was called to be consulted on this. The experience is not news to me. I have experience and share it. I was told then of a mission of a different nature—much more political; reflecting the new characteristics that the ministry has been acquiring lately and which in such an exemplary manner Alarcon has directed. I was told, above all, of a political mission, a mission with a strong political content. In deference to the truth, I have to admit that I do not have that much experience but I have gained some from life and my work in the UJC. Therefore, I am surprised but the tasks have been described to me as a highly important political mission and I have been working in the political arena for a long time now.

[Rodriguez] I remember you visiting Spain, Mexico, South America, not as a member of the Minrex, but in missions on behalf of Cuba.

[Martinez] I believe this is interesting because the UJC has developed extensively its international ties. I believe this has played a very important role. Last night I was talking about the "This is who we are; We are young" exhibit in Barcelona in which 80 representatives from all sectors of Cuba's society participated and Robaina headed. That was a great political delegation which later visited Galicia, Seville, and Madrid.

The UJC has conducted an extremely busy program of international activities which goes beyond ties with other youth organizations and has had widespread contacts. The GRANMA editorial acknowledges the changes that took place within the UJC and in its international activities.

[Robaina] I believe that is true. This is among all the things that the work with the UJC has provided to all of us who in one way or another have gone through this organization. I believe that in a large measure, the youth do nothing more than interpret a concept of foreign service which should also be undertaken. I believe that presently, foreign service and missions are not the responsibility of a ministry or minister alone. I believe that the youth have contributed in opening a space, a communication, and spread the efforts conducted here by the youth. I believe that although this part is less known, the youth movement promoted a strong international program in many parts of America, Europe, and Asia. I had the opportunity to participate in these. This is not my main specialty but I believe that to defend the work of the revolution, in my opinion, what is needed is to be aware of what the Revolution is doing.

In the same measure that the youth movement plays an important role in the main economic, productive, social, and political activities; they enter the international arena to fight, teach, and present another point of view. I believe this is what has been done. I truly thank the youth movement for the opportunities it gave me. [passage omitted]

If this is my new mission, I give to this mission all and more than what I gave to the UJC. I believe the success of this mission does not depend on me alone. It depends on what I can contribute and, above all, the help of a team, the many comrades who work on foreign policy. This is a task which is not the responsibility of the Foreign Ministry and its minister alone. I am glad I am going into a ministry and have tasks where, above all, the policy to be followed is dictated by the people themselves. In the same measure that I am convinced the top foreign policy is directed by our people, I feel highly committed to relay the efforts these people are conducting. If to this we add the fact that the foreign policy is not improvised with each minister but it has a trajectory of over 30 years, that we have outstanding representatives of this ministry and foreign policy such as Comrade Fidel, and someone like Alarcon who has moved to a post where he has to continue to work on this foreign policy. I feel that today I am the most well-accompanied minister and have the most collaborators in foreign policy. I doubt other ministries have as many collaborators, specialists, and capable people to contribute with foreign policy.

For this reason, I feel nervous as a matter of fact but I am more committed. I feel I have a lot of help. I feel supported by people who do the main work. I feel supported by many people who have not abandoned me and have from the beginning promoted a team effort. We all have to work in foreign service. Foreign service is nowadays conducted in our laboratories, in the manner in which we conduct the food program, the manner the youth take to the squares and streets, and in the same manner as anyone who has a foreign mission does when he speaks of the work conducted in Cuba. Therefore, I believe I have many tools and people that can help me with this task.

All these ideas will now be put together. This will require a great effort of me, learning many terms and things which I, honestly, have not had to deal with before. I got this haircut before I was appointed. I was asked on Friday night. I spent the weekend, 48 hours, thinking about the appointment while everyone else kept wondering who the minister would be. I want to add that I am convinced that I am taking on a responsibility where I represent a bigger sector than the youth. [passage omitted]

[Martinez] There is a new Mexican ambassador to Cuba, whom we recently had on this program, and during your visit to Mexico she was the general secretary of the Institutional Revolutionary Party [PRI]. I asked her, because she mentioned she had met Robaina, how come a PRI official met with a youth leader? She answered no, that he is not a youth leader but a political leader. In other words, I do not believe all the diplomats where surprised as NOTIMEX says. Yet, I believe it is significant that this is the second major unexpected news this month. This shows our society continues its process of change. The news this year has been very important: 24 February, Alarcon's appointment to preside the National Assembly, the events at the National Assembly, and the People's Government system.

How do you plan to bring the freshness mentioned by that article to the diplomatic work and the embassies abroad?

[Robaina] I believe that the freshness required should not only be attached to the youth work alone. I say this because I have other examples, besides myself. I have the example of older people who have known how to bring freshness to the diplomatic arena. As a citizen I believe I have seen freshness introduced into the foreign work in the past months. I feel very privileged by having seen how Alarcon shaped the work of the ministry. Efforts have been made so that the ministry fulfills its role and becomes an organization dedicated to speeding up communication, solving problems, presenting our points of view, and being up-to-date. I believe that it is very important to meet the daily event straight on. I believe that we should be our toughest critics. This is what we have learned through all these years of Revolution. I believe that the freshness and work style required is different from the language used in the youth movement.

I believe what we did in the UJC was to work in the manner taught by the leadership of the Revolution, the manner Fidel works everyday, and I believe that this is already being done in the Foreign Ministry. I believe that to this I will be able to add what I learned in the youth movement. I believe this is perfectly possible because I have seen it in the few hours I have been at the ministry. I have had the privilege of having many comrades explain to me in what measure the work of the ministry is being improved, how important communication with our representatives abroad is, how important communication with the foreign press accredited in Cuba is, so that we can have an important fluidity in our foreign relations, and how we immediately have to deal with every important world event. This is what being up to the minute is all about. I would be wrong to transmit the mechanism from one organization to another because what we have to do, above all, is see what to do in terms of foreign service.

During the last missions, I was told a lot that you [Cubans] are doing many things in Cuba, and what is being done is not known abroad. I believe all of us, every leader and delegation traveling abroad, in every contact with the press, have to work at this. Fidel said a few days ago that this is a time to increase dialogue, conversations, and speaking. I believe this is how we can explain foreign service and the work of our people. I believe that contributions have already been made in this field and that we can transmit this and make it part of our work at the ministry. [passage omitted] [Martinez] It is obvious that the enemy will continue to look for ways to misinform, divide, and confuse. They have no choice. They did it with Alarcon and Lage's appointments because, in short, their goal is to portray Cuba as stalled, without change, without transformations, without improvements. However, they are running out of arguments because events are taking place too fast for them: the Communist Party of Cuba Congress, the amendments to the Constitution, the new Electoral Law, the elections by direct and secret vote. They do not know what to do next. We have talked with Castro about the incredible ABC newspaper article that attempted to libel, lie, and trick the Spanish public with regard to the results of the elections in Cuba. You are fully aware of this because in your tour of Spain many times he had to hold meetings, debates, and news conferences. There are many people who are misinformed. That is the truth. [passage omitted]

[Robaina] Our generation had a unique privilege. I never tire of speaking—among ourselves, in stages, and in debates with students and youth of several sectors—about the historic privilege of our generation. I am part of a generation that grew up during difficult, complex times but which has been actively participating alongside the historic generation which brought the Revolution to us. I believe, for example, that the work with university students in that complex 1979-1983 period saw many famous events during which political life in the universities was very intense. We began to see during that period how to wage and win important struggles in the international arena. This, of course, begins to prepare you and at that age one makes millions of plans, ideas, discussions, debates, and plans for the future and its possibilities. This prepared us for our work in the youth movement.

When the rectification process began in 1986, we never considered leaving the youth outside the rectification process. We had our own thing that needed rectification. We had to join that struggle. I believe that the great rectification process help shape a whole generation of leaders. Today, we have Contino and many other comrades, not only in the youth movement, but hundreds of young cadres already out of the youth movement who

today are in the PCC, the government, the National Assembly, factories, and enterprises. All that foresight and precaution, that once again Fidel demonstrated, speeded up our training through work and participation. I have no doubt that this also became a school. If we add to this that lately we have witnessed events such as those in Eastern Europe, where we saw not only what happened but also the consequences, where the disintegration of the USSR was predicted by Fidel before it happened, and a special period in a phase such as this one, evidently, this forces the youth to take up an active role in saving this work, in perfecting it, and in ensuring its survival.

I believe this has influenced us a great deal and has speeded up our participation in the process. I believe this provides possibilities for work.

I believe Rosalia, Hector, and others have mentioned this: The decision is controversial. However, I can honestly say I like controversial decisions. I believe it is more useful and that it has been issued with great courage. I believe that 48 hours ago, no one could have thought of saying that there are comrades who are against the designated minister. I think that there might be comrades and enemies of the Revolution, of course, who have millions of reasons; but we should not think that those concerned do it because they are against it and question the decision.

I believe it is normal for the people to have such worries and that it is very courageous for all of us to talk about it here on television. I believe the manner we have dealt with it has turned this process into news. I believe that we speak candidly about comrades having doubts and this should not offend, hurt, or traumatize us. I believe they are justified and honest; but we also have to take many things into consideration. I believed, for example, that the ministry was conducting a very strong mission; but since I was first told about it, I have heard about the political connotations of the work of the ministry and thing are becoming clearer now. I think this also helps the people understand that what is wanted is not a perfect minister.

It would be nice to have a perfect minister. It is possible to have one someday when future changes are made. We hoped we could count on Alarcon for a long time. We would have liked to keep a career man like Alarcon, but we also needed Alarcon at the National Assembly. I believe that Alarcon's experience is needed in a National Assembly that has created such expectation among the people. He has an important mission in that post. I honestly feel glad to be able candidly to say this. I do not want anyone to think I have personal aspirations. because appointments such as this are not planned. The news just fell into our lap. What I can tell you is that, since this trust has indeed been placed in me, what I can assure you will not be lacking is dedication on my part, a striving to improve, a spirit of cooperation, and teamwork in the conduct of foreign policy, which is the kind of work this country needs. Cuba not only needs a shining foreign minister, it needs a team of comrades involved in conducting an effort in every sphere. I believe we need collaborators in this field more than ever.

[Passage omitted]

[Martinez] How would the new Cuban foreign minister respond to those who predict that the Cuban Revolution is running out of time?

[Robaina] I would say that in this matter I have the advantage of having been asked this as the secretary general of the UJC for the last three years. They have been coming up with all sorts of deadlines for the Revolution since January 1990. Many deadlines have been issued for the Revolution. Since things were ripe for something to happen in Cuba after the events in Eastern Europe, predictions were made abroad. These are always wrong because they underestimate the capabilities of our people and are unaware of our ability to rise under difficult circumstances. They keep moving the deadline from January to July, from July to December, from 1990 to 1991, from 1991 to 1992, and from 1992 to 1993. They do not speak in terms of months any longer. Now they have a 200-day theory. I believe that this is just another deadline made abroad and one more thing our people will defeat through effort, participation, and work. What does not register in any computer—as is commonly said where I come from—is the way our people rise to a challenge and grow. I believe this is simply another deadline we will defeat.

[Passage omitted]

Robaina Remarks on Outgoing Foreign Minister; Alarcon Comments

FL0204174193 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Text] During the farewell gathering held for outgoing Foreign Minster Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada, his replacement expressed thanks for the confidence placed in him.

[Begin Robaina recording] Comrade workers, a few days ago I could not even have imagined that I would someday have the responsibility of bidding farewell to Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada, if farewell is even the most appropriate word for cases such as this. I say this for the simple reason that Alarcon will never leave this, his, ministry, which has been the trench from which he has waged the battle since 1962. How, then, could one imagine one's being chosen to lend continuity to the work of someone one so greatly admires and respects? [end recording]

In an interview granted this national television newscast, Cuba's former foreign minister and current president of the National Assembly expressed this opinion.

[Begin Alarcon recording] I repeat: I do not have the slightest doubt that Roberto Robaina is the best possible foreign minister that the Republic of Cuba could find. But in addition to this, of course, the diplomacy of the entire people means that we all participate in conducting

it. He is not going to be alone. He was explaining, last night over television, that he will have....[rephrases] that he is sure that he can count on the help, the cooperation, of all those of us who have in the past in one way or another had to do with, and who will continue to have to do with, this sphere of activity. But in addition to this, he is accompanied by 10 million Cubans, because what he has to represent and convey abroad is precisely that! The reality of a combatant people, of a population that is the executor of the diplomacy of the entire people. [end recording]

'Pirate' Boat Attacks Cypriot Tanker

FL0404225593 Havana Tele Rebelde and Cuba Vision Networks in Spanish 0100 GMT 4 Apr 93

[Text] The tanker (Nikonos), which flies the flag of Cyprus, was attacked by a pirate motorboat north of Matanzas Province, between 8 and 10 miles northeast of Icacos Peninsula, at 2320 hours on 2 April, as it was transporting fuel oil [preceding two words in English] to the port of Carupano in Puerto Padre.

After firing on the ship the attacking vessel, a small, fast motorboat, took off toward the north. It has been learned that the hits the ship took were from small-caliber weapons and caused no serious damage; fortunately, there were no victims among the crew.

Terrorist attacks such as this one, which endangered the lives of the mixed Cuban-Cypriot crew, can also sink the attacked vessels and provoke consequences of incalculable damage to our economy and the ecology.

Events such as this confirm the terrorist intentions of counterrevolutionary elements that, from U.S. territory, continue to encourage and plan unscrupulous, aggressive actions against civilian targets of great economic importance to our country, with the objective of creating obstacles to and frustrating the enormous efforts our people and government are exerting to make it through the complex current circumstances.

* Foreign Investment in Oil Exploration Discussed

93CA0085A Havana BOHEMIA in Spanish No 7, 12 Feb 93 pp 32-36

[Interview with Dr. Juan Fleites Melo, director of Comercial CUPET, S.A. by Fernando Davalos; place and date not given]

[Text] Prospecting for oil in the vast, unexplored stretches of our national territory will enter a new stage. Now that what is known as "international bidding" for risk contracts has begun, with prestigious firms from various countries participating, large-scale prospecting will be carried out.

Eleven parcels, both on land and offshore (in the shallow waters of the Cuban continental shelf), are the subject of contracts that are being negotiated with these potential partners. Bidding will take place in Calgary, Canada and London, England.

Today the magazine BOHEMIA presents to its readers an interview with Dr. Juan Fleites Melo, director of Comercial CUPET, S.A. In this interview, he explains the steps our country is going through in this complex and interesting field, the moderate but encouraging results that have arisen out of its decision to promote economic partnerships to develop this vital sector, and the unquestionable prospects for increasing the discovery of new oil and gas fields in the archipelago.

[Davalos] Why has Cuba turned to risk contracts with foreign companies for oil prospecting in our territory?

[Fleites] This objective was pursued for years with Soviet financing, which does not exist today. We received drilling equipment, geophysicists, consumable materials, technical assistance, etc. But as you know, this support ended abruptly.

[Davalos] Does anyone know how much that financing added up to?

[Fleites] It totaled some 60 million rubles a year during the last two five-year periods. As our economic ties to the Soviets were eliminated or reduced, or as their nature changed substantially with the break-up of the Soviet Union, Cuba was prevented from continuing this costly research.

[Davalos] Even in view of the evidence of possible new discoveries?

[Fleites] Even considering that there are geological indicators pointing to discoveries of larger concentrations of gas and oil, our country cannot set aside a large volume of foreign currency resources for these risky ventures. The Cuban economy cannot afford to allocate $60 million right now to a venture that will have unpredictable results, even though there are very credible signs of new discoveries.

[Davalos] When did these partnerships begin?

[Fleites] When the situation with the USSR and the former socialist countries had not yet deteriorated completely, the Government of Cuba made a decision to begin talks with foreign oil companies. In 1990, the first of these risk contracts was signed, with a French consortium made up of two companies, TOTAL and the European Petroleum Company (CEP).

At present there are other similar contracts, such as the one signed with the Swedish company TAURUS and several Canadian firms. All of these companies have thus been guaranteed that their legitimate interests will be respected, as provided in the Constitution and current legislation.

[Davalos] What do these firms think of their relations with Cuba?

[Fleites] We can say that all our partners are satisfied with the type of relationship they have with Comercial CUPET, S.A., which is the Cuban firm participating in these ventures, and with the other companies and agencies of this country.

[Davalos] How costly is a risk prospecting program?

[Fleites] Under these contracts, the foreign companies have to provide all the capital, that is, the technical equipment for the exploration of a given area. The prospecting may last four or five years, and the estimated volume of investment ranges between $30 million and $50 million, depending on whether the site is on land or offshore.

If the search yields negative results, the contracting firm withdraws, and obviously that money is lost. In this hypothetical case, which has not yet happened in the areas being explored in Cuba, we would not lose.

[Davalos] And what if the results of these explorations are positive?

[Fleites] The partner company would move on to another stage, called "development," in which hefty investments are made. Then they have to drill wells and build storage facilities, plants to treat the crude oil they obtain, oil and gas pipelines, and other infrastructure facilities. The partners also pay these expenses.

[Davalos] Is it very costly to develop a new field?

[Fleites] That also depends on whether it is on land or offshore, what the conditions are, etc., but it can be said that the cost ranges from $200 million to $300 million, obviously a very large investment.

[Davalos] And when does actual drilling begin?

[Fleites] The next stage is that of "exploitation," when the field begins to produce usable oil.

[Davalos] In our case, if we were to discover oil, would it still be ours? Could our country use this fuel?

[Fleites] Without a doubt, because it can be no other way. This resource, if we find it, will belong to our country, but we have a contractual obligation that will have to be honored: We must pay the company that is our partner, which has borne the expenses, and obviously we must guarantee its profit margin. This is the way the oil business works, be it in Cuba or anywhere else in the world.

How do we pay them? With part of the oil that is produced, in a proportion agreed to in advance in the contract, prior to beginning exploration. In the Cuban oil business, these terms have been agreed upon to the satisfaction of both Cuba and its partners, although we are still in the investigation stage.

[Davalos] Of course, there is no certainty that oil will be discovered.

[Fleites] It is a risk contract; the name says it all. Neither we nor their most highly trained experts know for certain what the results of the search will be. We are going on scientific and technical predictions, on the degree of knowledge we already possess, and on the studies carried out by Soviets and Cubans; and, of course, the better the prospects, the lower the risk, so we are able to negotiate more advantageous terms in the contract.

[Davalos] Is it common to enter into this type of risk partnership for prospecting, developing, and working oil deposits?

[Fleites] In the majority of countries it is, especially in developing countries, because there is no doubt that it is the most suitable. In the past in Cuba, and even today in some places, the system of concessions has been used. Under that system, the government cedes territories and the oil company does whatever it deems appropriate in those places. There is no control over its activities, and if it finds oil, all it has to do is pay the taxes, if there are any, and there is not any effective control over that, either.

Under our system of risk contracts, which is a form of partnership that is universally known, the government or the state enterprise that represents it has a role in decisionmaking and exerts control over what is done in this area. The international oil companies have gradually adapted to this system, because the system of concessions is becoming a thing of the past, something seen in only a few countries nowadays. The risk contract is widespread now in almost all of Latin America, Vietnam, Angola, Indonesia, Yemen, and other places, and it has yielded good results for everyone.

[Davalos] What is Cuba's role in the risk contracts that have been established and are operating here?

[Fleites] As is the case elsewhere, here these contracts are carried out under the direction of an "administration committee," made up of three representatives of the foreign companies in the partnership and three representatives of the Cuban firm CUPET. This body makes decisions, and they must be unanimous, which means that both sides must always be in agreement on the most important matters.

[Davalos] Returning to the prospecting in the field, has there been any confirmation by the foreign companies involved in risk contracts that a new discovery may be made?

[Fleites] In the research conducted by these companies, these possibilities have been confirmed, without a doubt. The studies conducted by the French corporation TOTAL-CEP confirmed what Cuban geologists had predicted in the assigned area, which is an offshore parcel in northeastern Matanzas Province.

[Davalos] But we do not have any oil yet; it is still underground.

[Fleites] That is true, but we cannot deny that this confirmation has given a strong boost to Cuban oil specialists and to the whole nation, even though we have yet to go through the arduous and costly period of exploration. I think that this possibility, corroborated by these prestigious oil companies, should now be considered an "asset" of Cuba's, something of value.

For our part, we can state categorically that there is oil on our territory, and with the equipment and prospecting technology and the risk partnerships now in

operation, we will find it and we will put it to work for the good of the country, with a share of the profits going to these international firms, of course.

[Davalos] Some foreign press reports say TOTAL has withdrawn. Is this true?

[Fleites] People have said that, and worse. But the best evidence to disprove that is the second risk contract signed with TOTAL-CEP last December, to carry out studies of another geographic area of our national territory. In this case, the parcel is on the southern border of the first parcel, which is in the shallow waters of the Bay of Santa Clara.

[Davalos] What kind of parcel is this second one, in northeastern Matanzas?

[Fleites] It is on land, in the area of Marti and Corralillo, and it encompasses the Majaguillar marsh. Some exploration had already been done in this area, and some drilling had yielded positive results, but it is very expensive to drill wells there, and we do not have the resources. That is why this second contract was necessary.

[Davalos] What else can you tell us about the first parcel explored by the French companies? When will drilling begin?

[Fleites] The most important news is that the first wells will be drilled this year, although we do not have an exact date. There is one parcel of 1,900 square kilometers, with small islands and deep spots. The plan calls for dredging channels to reach the selected drilling sites, and right now we are carrying out preliminary research to determine the thickness of the sediments on the ocean bottom. Then we will decide what equipment will be needed to drill the wells. The equipment will be taken to the exact place, which is really very complicated.

[Davalos] Where is the area covered by the contract with the Swedish firm TAURUS?

[Fleites] It consists of shallow waters and keys in the Gulfs of Ana Maria and Guacanayabo, south of Cuba. Our projections for that area are also very interesting. But we must wait a while longer, as the studies are still being conducted.

[Davalos] These contracts are bilateral; what about the bidding?

[Fleites] It has been bilateral so far, but normally, with a view to seeking alternatives, countries with hydrocarbon potential hold international bidding competitions—not auctions—among companies from all over that may be interested in the venture. On these occasions....

[Davalos] Like what will happen soon in Calgary or London?

[Fleites] Exactly. The firms that send representatives there will be told what the law is in Cuba with respect to these risk contracts, and what our government's policy is on this matter. They will also be given a briefing on the geological characteristics of the territory to be explored in the country.

After that, the companies that want more detailed information will pay a fee for it. They can buy the information where the bidding is conducted, in Cuba, or in other places.

[Davalos] What oil companies will participate in the bidding?

[Fleites] Invitations have been sent to dozens of firms, and at this point some 40 have confirmed that they will attend the sessions in one or the other city. I am convinced that many more will be present, although this obviously does not mean they have already decided to make a deal.

Bidding involves setting a deadline—in this case, 1 August 1993—to submit proposals to CUPET on the parcel or parcels they are interested in exploring. In Calgary and London 11 of these parcels will be offered: seven on land, three offshore, and one a combination of land and offshore. You could say that they run the length of the entire territory of Cuba.

[Davalos] Do these parcels cover all of the national territory?

[Fleites] They do not cover it. Actually they are part of the most interesting areas, as far as oil potential is concerned.

[Davalos] Why is the bidding being conducted in Calgary and London?

[Fleites] These transactions tend to take place in the world's oil centers. The most important one is Houston, Texas, but we Cubans are not allowed to go there. Calgary, however, is the Canadian oil capital, and London is the second most important center in the world, which is to our benefit.

[Davalos] Do our oil experts support Cuba's efforts to get involved in these complex business affairs?

[Fleites] Absolutely. Cuban specialists working with the partner firms have been particularly active and enthusiastic, and they have assimilated the technology of those firms, some of them on the cutting edge of world technology.

I might add that our workers are also noted for their high productivity when they work for these companies. They are as productive as any other workers in the world, and this is not just propaganda; the partners themselves recognize it. The brigades that have combined Cuban and foreign personnel are models of organization and discipline, and they are very serious about the efficient fulfillment of their programs.

[Davalos] Are we good at negotiating?

[Fleites] I am not the person to answer that question. I can only tell you that the group that is responsible for that is made up of engineers, economists, and attorneys; in other words, it is multidisciplinary, and it has a high level of skill and experience. It has received training in business skills, something that is new to us, and it will continue in this area, always with the same objective.

Moreover, we are in contact with the highest echelons of the country's leadership, and of course, the final decisions are always made by our government.

[Davalos] And what is the objective of our negotiators?

[Fleites] To guarantee and safeguard Cuba's interests.

Barbados

Government Considering Partial Divestment of National Bank

FL0404233393 Bridgetown CANA in English 2049 GMT 4 Apr 93

[Text] Bridgetown, Barbados, April 4, CANA—The Barbados Government is considering partial divestment of the wholly state-owned Barbados National Bank (BNB), according to Prime Minister Erskine Sandiford.

Sandiford, speaking Saturday [3 April] evening at the official opening of the BNB's new headquarters, said the bank in the meantime would be restructured to enhance its profitability.

"The proposed changes are intended to enhance the profitability of the BNB in the near future and pave the way for my government to offer Barbadians shares in a profitable financial institution," said Sandiford, who is also minister of finance.

As part of the restructuring, the act establishing the BNB will be repealed and the institution will be licensed to operate under the new financial intermediaries act which governs the operation of financial institutions here.

Haiti

Senate President Warns International Community on Solutions

FL0204190193 Port-au-Prince LE NOUVELLISTE in French No 34.511 1 Apr 93 pp 1, 12

[Press release signed by Senator Thomas Eddy Dupiton, president of the Senate Alliance Sector and entitled: "Press Release Warning From Senate (Alliance Sector)"]

[Text] Since the henceforth historical date of 16 March 1993, the Haitian people, shattered, hear statements, one more extravagant than the other, coming from statesmen and foreign diplomats commenting on the national crisis.

The local and foreign press mention certain scenarios for a solution to the crisis which, the least one can say, are humiliating for the Haitian people and in contempt of the sovereignty of the State of Haiti.

Therefore the Office of the Senate believes that it is its duty to warn the international community against all solutions that would consider the use of force, at the expense of the inalienable right of the Haitian people to self determination.

Furthermore, in the interest of truth and to curtail certain rumors regarding the possible dismissal of the current commander in chief, as a consequence of a possible stranglehold by the UN/OAS mission on the Haitian Armed Forces, the Office of the Senate makes it a point of recalling that Lieutenant General Raoul Cedras has been appointed for three years in compliance with the provisions of Article 141 of the Constitution.

The Office of the Senate considers it also timely to recall the positive answer of the lieutenant general, on the day of his ratification by the upper chamber, to the question of a senator who was asking him if, by requesting the opinion of the legislative power, he intended to respect the principle of requisition. Today, when the country must face such hardships, this office believes it is indicated to call on the vigilance of the civilian general in chief, so that like the indigenous Army, his troops can reedit, if it were deemed necessary, the wonders of Capois, called "La Mort" [hero of independence].

While renewing its faith in the mutual respect that must prevail among sovereign countries, the Office of the Senate formally promises its support to any solution in conformity with the provisions of the Constitution and the laws of the Republic.

MDN Says Solution Should Be Based on Article 149 of Constitution

FL0204223593 Port-au-Prince Radio Soleil Network in Creole 1200 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Text] Another reaction comes from the Mobilization for National Development, MDN, which says it agrees with the Clinton administration's steps to resolve the Haitian crisis. He [not further identified] points out that this solution should be based on Article 149 of the Constitution because he thinks Jean-Bertrand Aristide's return to Haiti is not possible.

According to the party headed by Hubert de Ronceray, the international community continues to support Article 148 of the Constitution although one of the consequences of this attitude is the form of government that is leading the country at this time.

Meanwhile, the MDN points out that the international observers continue to occupy the country. They entered the parliament. They agree with all that Aristide's partisans are doing everywhere in the country. But what the United Nations and the OAS do not understand, adds the MDN, is that while all maneuvers are being made, a civil war threatens Haiti because the return of the exiled president is not possible.

In this case, Professor de Ronceray's party advises the United Nations and the OAS that the solution to the country's crisis must come from Haiti and that it must be sought in Article 149 of the Constitution if the international community really wants the restoration of constitutional order, the establishment of peace everywhere, and the resumption of economic development.

While speaking of Article 149 of the Constitution, it reminds us that Justice Joseph Nerette should return to the head of the executive to reinforce the various institutions so that new presidential elections can be held within two years at the latest. If the country's crisis is not resolved this way, a great catastrophe might occur in Haiti, according to what the MDN has written in this note dated 31 March.

Deputy Criticizes UN/OAS Mediator's 'Attitude'

FL0204182993 Port-au-Prince Radio Soleil Network in Creole 1200 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Excerpts] A member of the 45th legislature has criticized Dante Caputo's attitude in the negotiations and has proposed the participation of the representatives of all sectors in the negotiations so everyone in the country can be satisfied. According to Deputy Denis Saint-Fort, Caputo has neglected too many sectors in the negotiations he has held in the country. Among those sectors, the deputy has quoted the parliament, the Duvalierists, the voodoo followers, and so on. He is wondering if it is not the country that is being destroyed when the international mediator displays such a behavior. The international community has not really come to help Haiti solve its problems because Dante Caputo considers himself the sole chief of the country. This is a statement by Deputy Denis Saint-Fort who adds that since the beginning, he has never agreed with the United Nations or the OAS.

[Begin Saint-Fort recording] Since the beginning, I have never agreed with the presence of either the United Nations or the OAS in Haiti because I believed Haitians could have problems with them. But as Haitians cannot get on, I wanted to agree that those people could come to help. When I consider the way things are being done, however, I realize that they have not really come to help. I see that Caputo behaves like a king, like a lord in the country, because I see he is the one who is commanding. Even we in the parliament have good reasons to wonder if we are really parliamentarians because I believe....[changes thought] Caputo knows what a parliament means in his country. Second, I am wondering whether Caputo is really working for Aristide's return. Because even though he says he is working for Aristide's return, I believe there are many sectors that he has neglected and that he has never approached. Those sectors include the parliament, although some parliamentarians have taken steps so they can talk to him. There are also the Duvalierists. Personally, I am not a Duvalierist. But they are nevertheless part of the solution because they are a force. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Saint-Fort also gave his opinion in an article published this week by THE NEW TIMES speaking of the resignation of the Haitian Army chief as one of the conditions for a resolution to the country's crisis. On that score, Saint-Fort stated that the commander in chief of the Army should not be asked to resign if the civilian mission really wants to respect the country's Constitution.

FNCD Deputy Opposes Choice of Prime Minister From ANDP

FL0204221193 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1700 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Excerpt] The National Front for Change and Democracy, FNCD, is opposed to the choice of a prime minister from ANDP, National Alliance for Democracy and Progress, in the framework of a negotiated solution to the Haitian crisis. FNCD Deputy Pierre Canel Joseph Rindal said on 1 April that he was against the possible choice of a prime minister coming from former ANDP within the scope of steps aiming at the return of democracy in the country. The legislator, opponent of the current government, supports Aristide's position in favor of a prime minister from the opposition. He thinks, however, the people in charge of the coalition now in power symbolize only corruption and repression. [passage omitted].

Government Publishes Law on Monetary Ceiling Increase

FL0204225293 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1700 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Text] The government has published the law regarding the raised monetary ceiling and authorizing the Central Bank, BRH, to proceed to a new issue of the national currency. In the preamble to this law dated 27 March, the government acknowledges that the country's financial system is facing a scarcity of currency mainly due to the progress of inflation.

The first article of the law, approved by both progovernment branches in the parliament, stipulates that the National Bank of the Republic of Haiti is authorized to issue national currency in an amount not to exceed 500 million gourdes. This amount brings the monetary issuance ceiling to 2.7 billion gourdes.

Military Men in Jeremie Said Singing 'Threatening' Songs

FL0204225193 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1700 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Excerpt] Military men in Jeremie, wearing fatigues, shouted threatening words in their songs, according to our correspondent.

[Begin recording, in Creole] Our arms are strong; we have billies; we have weapons. If there are bulls, it is we who are the bulls.

These are the words that about 200 military men were shouting throughout the streets of the city on the morning of 1 April. The military, who were wearing white T-shirts and olive-green pants, were not carrying placards or signs indicating that they were demonstrating. It surprised many people in Jeremie, however, who are wondering what is going on, because the military does not usually behave this way. This is the second time

during this week, 31 March and 1 April, that military authorities have undertaken such an action. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Jamaica

Prime Minister Promises 'Drastic' Measures To Improve Electoral System

FL0404231193 Bridgetown CANA in English 2204 GMT 4 Apr 93

[Text] Kingston, Jamaica, April 4, CANA—Against a background of rising public disgust at the level of fraud, voter intimidation and administrative bungling which marred last Tuesday's [30 March] general election, Jamaica's Prime Minister P.J. Patterson has promised drastic measures to improve the electoral system.

In a nationally televised address shortly after taking the oath of office for a second term late Saturday, Patterson said his administration intended to introduce a national registration and identification system, a computerised identification and voting system and "substantial updating of electortal legislation.

"It is something we cannot fail to afford. The tools and the funding must be found to do the job," said Patterson, Jamaica's sixth prime minister since political independence from Britain in 1962.

"While no one dares to dispute that general elections in Jamaica have always reflected the will of the people, we must continue the search for an electoral system that is not open to abuse," said Patterson, whose Peoples National Party (PNP) was returned with an increased majority over the opposition Jamaica Labour Party (JLP).

With the final count not yet completed, the PNP is set to secure at least 50 seats in the 60-member House of Representatives.

The two political parties and independent observers agree that even if the election had been "perfect", the PNP would have won easily. But the level of irregularities has led to calls for a total overhaul of the electoral system and the JLP has indicated its intention to test some constituency results in court.

Patterson said the bipartisan Electoral Advisory Committee set up in 1979 to supervise the conduct of Jamaican elections through an electoral office, needed "to work on ways to further safeguard the (electoral) system".

Meanwhile, the committee which comprises two representatives each from the two political parties and three independent members, has expressed its shame at events surrounding Tuesday's election.

"We were ... ashamed to be associated with a system in which such heinous activities took place, although much of these were outside of the ambit of our control", said a statement signed by the committee chairman, University of the West Indies (UWI) Professor Gladstone Mills.

Despite the problems, however, the statement pointed out that "no problems of violence, intimidation or fraud were reported in respect of 47 constituencies (including 43 rural ones)".

Observers agree that fraud and violence, which the police say took the lives of at least 12 people, was largely confined to the so-called "garrison" areas of downtown Kingston, southern, central and western St Andrew and a few urban communities in the southern parishes of St Catherine (including Spanish Town) and Clarendon.

In Jamaica's political culture, "garrison" refers to areas where one political party controls the streets and public opinion, to the virtual exclusion of all opposition.

Meanwhile, the Jamaica Council of Churches - some of whose members have reported firsthand examples of election day fraud and intimidation - says it is compiling a report of its observations for submission to the political ombudsman, Justice James Kerr, the prime minister, the leader of the opposition, Edward Seaga and the chairman of the Electoral Advisory Committee.

St. Christopher and Nevis

IMF Predicting 'Broadly Satisfactory' Performance by Economy

FL0304190293 Bridgetown CANA in English 1622 GMT 3 Apr 93

[Text] Basseterre, St. Kitts, April 3, CANA—The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is predicting a "broadly satisfactory" performance by the St. Kitts-Nevis economy this year. A team from the Fund has just concluded a mission to the twin-island state to review the economy and make an assessment of medium term prospects.

"The immediate prospects for 1993 are that economic performance would continue to be broadly satisfactory," a concluding statement by the mission added. The Fund conducts a review in each member country of the lending agency in accordance with Article IV of the IMF agreement. The six-member team was headed by Sam Itam, deputy division chief of the Western hemisphere department of the IMF.

Over the period March 21-31, they collected various statistics and held discussions with prime minister and minister of finance, Dr. Kennedy Simmonds, Nevisian Premier Vance Amory, other government ministers, and senior government officials, as well as representatives of the private sector.

In their statement the IMF team reported that, "in 1991-92 economic performance of St. Kitts and Nevis was broadly satisfactory in most areas." They said the

strong performance in both years was due mainly to expansion in tourism, continued progress in the manufacturing sector, and buoyancy in agriculture (including sugar).

Real GDP [Gross Domestic Product] growth was projected to be about 6 per cent based on the strength of tourist and tourist- related activities, further gains in momentum in the construction sector and improvements in the sugar industry. Inflation is expected to continue on a generally declining trend and the external sector is "expected to remain favourable."

The team also reported that, "St. Kitts and Nevis maintained a prudent external borrowing policy" and they forecast public sector finances would improve strongly in 1993.

New Guerrero, Hidalgo Governors Take Office

PA0304175393 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Report by Hector Ramos and Jaime Guerrero; passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Text] Ruben Figueroa Alcocer was sworn in as new constitutional governor of Guerrero State before President Carlos Salinas de Gortari. Figueroa said he will govern without persecution or ill will, which would be harmful to the harmony and social peace of his office.

[Figueroa] "There will be no persecution, ill will, resentment, or offenses. We have a supreme duty to respect political pluralism."

After Figueroa took office, saying he harbored no ill will, the new governor urged Guerrero citizens to reject violence by respecting and complying with the law.

[Figueroa] "As of now, I urge fellow citizens to respect and comply with the law. Whoever misinterprets, twists, or disregards the law will be penalized."

President Carlos Salinas de Gortari announced that the federal government will support Guerrero in attaining social justice in strict compliance with the law.

[Salinas] "Guerrero wants to prosper in peace and harmony. Guerrero needs more social justice, tolerance, and compliance with the law. The federal government will support Governor Figueroa Alcocer so that Guerrero can achieve these goals."

Ruben Figueroa Alcocer said that public security and public education will have priority in his administration.

President Carlos Salinas de Gortari also attended the ceremony in which Jesus Murillo Karam took the oath of office as new constitutional governor of Hidalgo State in Pachuca on 1 April.

[Murillo] "I vow to work for the welfare and prosperity of the nation and Hidalgo State. Let the people demand it of me, if I fail to do so."

Murillo Karam stated that social welfare is the irrevocable basis of a better democracy and acknowledged the government's social and economic limitations. During the solemn ceremony held at the Pachuca legislative palace, Murillo recognized that the future is not easy and called for joint participation by all. All the candidates who participated in the 21 February election attended the ceremony.

[Murillo] "We are aware of our limitations and weaknesses, but we are also aware of our capabilities. We do not promise an easy or relaxed future. As we said during our campaign, the future of Hidalgo can be built only through work and determination."

Murillo Karam urged the people to change attitudes and to rid themselves of selfishness and inertia. He said the best way to improve the lives of Hidalgo residents is to get closer to the people. Murillo promised to fight extreme poverty and to promote education.

[Murillo] "We will fight extreme poverty and will increase our support."

President Salinas said the state solidarity projects must be carried out. He announced that 300 million pesos will be earmarked for social welfare in 1993. This represents a 1,200 percent increase in federal resources for Hidalgo State. The president attended the signing of the literacy agreement on state programs. The agreement was signed by the federal government, the Public Education Secretariat, and the Social Development Secretariat.

PRD Members Prevent Guerrero Governor From Entering Government Building

PA0404214893 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2010 GMT 4 Apr 93

[Text] Chilpancingo, Mexico, 4 Apr (EFE)—Approximately 300 members of the opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution [PRD], who accuse the new governor of the State of Guerrero of winning the election through fraud, prevented him from entering the government building on 4 April.

The election for governor of Guerrero was held on 21 February. Ruben Figueroa Alcocer, candidate for the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party [PRI], was declared the winner and sworn in on 1 April.

The same day Figueroa was sworn in, however, PRD members, who feel certain their party won the election, appointed Felix Salgado Macedonio, a former party candidate, "moral governor."

Since 30 March, the 300 PRD members have blocked access to the government building to every official "allegedly elected" on 21 February.

"We are fighting for power, not for the government building. We will prevent the false governor from entering the building. And if Figueroa does enter, it will be over my dead body and the bodies of the PRD members," Salgado Macedonio said. He added that, should Figueroa enter, "the only way he will be able to come out will be with his resignation in his hand."

This weekend PRD members held several "peaceful repudiation events," such as marches and public protests, and set up "information checkpoints" on the access routes to the port of Acapulco. They have been blocking highways and handing out leaflets to tourists that describe what goes on in Guerrero.

The state's "moral governor" reported that Figueroa has appointed "dishonest, corrupt, and murderous" officials in his office, a practice that PRD people must hamper.

"Guerrero is in mourning because democracy has been slaughtered. We only remain to be killed. The people's pressure becomes greater and greater. If this pressure gets out of control and leads to violence, I will not be the one to put this fire out," Salgado said.

He also said that the PRD National Directorate has "forsaken Guerrero" because Cuauhtemoc Cardenas, the party's candidate for president of Mexico in 1994

and former president of the party, "is not interested in the conflict and has forgotten all about us."

Roberto Robles Garnica, interim PRD president, which is Mexico's third largest political force, traveled to Chilpancingo, capital of Guerrero State, to mediate the problem. Robles said he is there to back up Salgado "unconditionally" because "the struggle is reasonable and we know what we are doing." Robles added that Cardenas has not expressed his position on the conflict "because he is too busy planning his campaign to become president of Mexico." Figueroa has declined to talk to the media, arguing that next week he will announce his position on the conflict.

On 30 March, PRD members kidnapped Robles and pressured him into backing up an armed movement against the "imposed governor." After spending 15 hours at the municipal building in Teloloapan where he was being held, Robles denied he had been detained by fellow party members and said he persuaded them to carry out peaceful protests instead.

Azteca Television Corporation Established

PA0204170193 Mexico City Canal 13 Television Network in Spanish 1300 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Report by Melina Villasana]

[Text] On 1 April, Azteca Television, Incorporated [Television Azteca Sociedad Anonima], a mixed-capital corporation, was established. It holds the concession to run Channel 7 and Channel 13 [Mexico City Canal 13 Television Network]. Here is the report on the change at Channels 13 and 7.

Beginnning on 1 Apri, the Mexican Corporation of Radio and Television ceased to exist and Azteca Television was established. Two agreements were signed within this framework: one with the Association of Musicians and another with the National Association of Performers [ANDA].

Federico del Real, leader of the Association of Musicians, explained in an interview the significance of signing this agreement with Azteca Television in the face of privatization.

[Begin Del Real recording] We, as important members of the television industry, are concerned over the programs carrying live music. I think that the privatization will result in new programs and ideas, which will create jobs for our musicians. [end recording]

Julio Aleman, secretary general of ANDA, referred to the importance of Azteca Television for the improvement and participation of actors in television.

[Begin Aleman recording] Azteca Television will be a competitive and commercial station, offering more jobs to performers. I think that this is what our country needed, namely a competitive television station offering more jobs to all groups of performers. This will improve our public image, the image of Azteca Television. [end recording]

Aleman said that the opening of Azteca Television will result in more jobs, opportunities for performers, and the launching of new careers.

El Salvador

President, UN Reach Agreement on Armed Forces Purge

PA0304033593 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0300 GMT 3 Apr 93

[Text] President Alfredo Cristiani reached an agreement with the United Nations to complete the process of purging the Armed Forces, consisting of granting leaves and retiring a group of officers mentioned in the Ad Hoc Commission report.

UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali informed the Security Council in a written note that an agreement was reached with Salvadoran Presidency Minister Oscar Santamaria, who has been in New York since 31 March discussing the subject.

In his first statement concerning the discussion of the plan sent by Cristiani, Butrus-Ghali said: My comments were transmitted to President Cristiani, who reviewed the plan. He added: Now, the new plan establishes that all the officers mentioned in the Commission report will be on leave no later than 30 June 1993, to complete the retirement procedures no later than 31 December 1993. Butrus-Ghali said while on leave, the officers will not occupy any public position.

President Accepts Defense Minister's Resignation

PA0304035093 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0300 GMT 3 Apr 93

[Text] Salvadoran President Alfredo Cristiani has accepted General Rene Emilio Ponce's resignation as defense minister. He did not say, however, when the high-ranking military commander will in fact step down. Gen. Ponce placed his post as national defense minister at President Cristiani's disposal on 12 March. Since then, left-wing forces have argued that the soldier resigned because he is one of the 15 officers who UN Secretary General Butrus-Butrus Ghali recommended should be removed, in compliance with the Ad Hoc Commission's recommendations. President Cristiani said on 2 April that he has accepted Gen. Ponce's resignation.

[Begin Cristiani recording] I have spoken with him and we have come to an agreement about his resignation. I have accepted it as of a given date. The specific date is related to the full compliance with the Ad Hoc Commission's recommendations. [end recording]

He also stated that the post of deputy defense minister, left vacant by Gen. Juan Orlando Zepeda, will not the filled until the military command restructuring process is completed.

[Begin Cristiani recording] We have not thought of any substitute for the time being. What I am saying is that the deputy minister position will remain vacant until we complete the total restructuring of the military high command. [end recording]

Cristiani also responded to statements made by left-wing organizations, which have asked the president to disclose the timetable he sent to the United Nations for meeting the Truth Commission's recommendations. The president said there is no such timetable. He said he told the United Nations the implementation of the recommendations will begin as soon as possible.

Information Secretary Remarks on Army Purge, Timetable

PA0304005093 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish 1800 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Report by Enrique Lemus]

[Text] Deputy Defense Minister General Juan Orlando Zepeda's retirement and Defense Minister Gen. Rene Emilio Ponce's proposal to resign from his post only leaves 13 military officers to complete the Armed Forces purge suggested by the Ad Hoc Commission. National Information Secretary Ernesto Altschul revealed the government is waiting for the UN secretary general's reply regarding the timetable that was recently submitted to complete the purge in June 1993. According to the Ad Hoc Commission, the officers participated in flagrant human rights violations during the 10-year war. The government submitted the new proposal to the UN secretary general after the rejection of a strategy that sought to complete the purge in 1994, when the current government completed its term.

[Begin recording] [Altschul] That is what we have proposed. The 15 remaining cases will be subject to a specific timetable. We will not confirm or deny the June deadline as long as there is no formal reply from the UN secretary general.

[Lemus] Does this mean 15 military officers have yet to be removed?

[Altschul] Exactly. There are 14 more to be precise because, as you well know, Gen. Zepeda has retired. That would leave 14 officers—meaning the minister and others who have been posted abroad.

[Lemus] We understand [words indistinct] will be complied with and we think [words indistinct] only the Ad Hoc Commission's recommendations and not the Truth Commission's recommendations.

[Altschul] No. There is an annex concerning the Truth Commission and it fully presents the government's views on each of the recommendations. The president has clearly stated we will fully comply with recommendations that fall under the Executive Branch's authority—if they do not violate the Constitution. There is certainly a direct connection and it has been personally outlined by Dr. Oscar Santamaria [Presidency minister] to the UN secretary general. [end recording]

The government has prepared a new timetable to complete the Armed Forces purge within the framework of

the peace accords. The UN Security Council is evaluating the timetable. Dr. Altschul said June does not represent a time limit for the purge because it all depends on the UN's decision.

[Begin recording] [Altschul] We said the recommendations would be implemented during the transition period. You may recall there was a lot of speculation because people believed the changes would not occur until 1994. In other words, the implementation of these recommendations will be carried out within the transition period; and, if they are implemented on a much earlier date, it will demonstrate the government's political will.

[Lemus] Does the military endorse the Ad Hoc Commission's timetable?
[Altschul] Definitely. The military has fully cooperated throughout the peace process, specifically concerning the Ad Hoc Commission.

[Lemus] [Words indistinct] expect military changes?
[Altschul] As I said, we should wait for the UN secretary general's reaction. You know the defense minister has tendered his resignation. The president has yet to appoint the new deputy defense minister, but significant changes will certainly occur in the military leadership and command posts at the various Armed Forces units once the measures are implemented.

[Lemus] It has been reported international aid is subject to the Armed Forces purge.
[Altschul] No. There was a problem concerning military aid, but you may recall the amount of that aid has been reduced because there is no longer a conflict to justify the aid. The rest of the aid, meaning the aid directly sent from the United States and the aid approved by a consultative group in Paris, has no connection with the Ad Hoc Commission's recommendations or the Truth Commission's recommendations. [end recording]

The government delegation that visited the United Nations to submit the official proposal is expected to return on 3 April. Altschul said it is necessary to wait for the international organization's reply before the Army purge is fully implemented.

Arena's Calderon Rejects U.S. Investigations

PA0204210393 San Salvador Radio Farabundo Marti Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Text] Arena [Nationalist Republican Alliance] presidential candidate Armando Calderon Sol on 2 April said the U.S. State Department has no right to carry out investigations in El Salvador. Calderon Sol rejected the U.S. investigation while speaking in the San Miguelito neighborhood of San Salvador. Here is the report:

[Begin recording] [Reporter Guillermo Rivera] The U.S. State Department has no right to carry out investigations in our country; it should conduct investigations on its own territory, San Salvador Mayor Armando Calderon Sol said. We are a sovereign and independent country and must not be bound by investigations by international organizations from the United States or anywhere else, Arena President Calderon Sol said when referring to the investigations by the U.S. State Department on individuals who appeared in the Truth Commission Report. The U.S. Administration is investigating whether previous U.S. Administrations engaged in human rights violations in El Salvador.

[Calderon] I think we are a sovereign country. El Salvador is an independent country and we must not be bound by or observe recommendations by international organizations from either the United States or anywhere else. I think that we must resolve our own problems. We are an independent country and Salvadorans.

[Rivera] No one will come from abroad to divide us or promote division among Salvadorans, the Arena presidential candidate for the 1994 elections added. He visited San Miguelito market to make a donation from Fonavifo [not further identified] to more than 40 families.

On the same subject, Armando Calderon Sol said he has no idea about the intentions of the U.S. Government to promote the investigations. He emphatically said, however, that foreign meddling in El Salvador must be rejected, regardless from where it comes. He rejected any U.S. investigation in El Salvador.

[Calderon Sol] I have no idea about the intention of this investigation. If the reports on the investigation are true, we must reject foreign meddling, regardless from where it comes.

[Rivera] In the last two weeks, the public learned of the position of the U.S. Government led by Bill Clinton, according to which, those persons accused in the Truth Commission report will be investigated. The investigation will be conducted to determine whether the U.S. Government engaged in human rights violations under previous administrations, led by George Bush and Ronald Reagan. [end recording]

Military Court Denies Amnesty to Man Sentenced for Red Zone Murders

PA0304005293 San Salvador EL MUNDO in Spanish 1 Apr 93 p3

[Text] The First Military Court has not granted amnesty to William Celio Rivas Bolanos, who is serving a 25-year sentence for the Red Zone murders. The court explained it is waiting for a report by the Foreign Ministry deciding if four of the murder victims had diplomatic status. If they did, the amnesty would not apply to Rivas Bolanos.

It was recalled there were four U.S. military advisers (Marines) among the 13 victims. The marines had diplomatic status and were covered by international treaties. The Red Zone massacre occurred in June 1985 in the San Benito Neighborhood. A group of armed men burst into a restaurant and machine-gunned the people there, killing four U.S. advisers, two Costa Ricans, two Guatemalans, and five Salvadorans.

Juan Miguel Garcia Melendez, Jose Abraham Dimas Aguilar, and William Celio Rivas Bolanos, who according to court documents belonged to the Revolutionary Party of Central American Workers, were tried for the massacre. The first two were given light sentences and are free already because they served their time. Rivas Bolanos must serve his 25-year sentence. His lawyers, however, feel the Amnesty Law To Consolidate Peace also covers him.

FMLN Accuses Air Force of Bombings in Ilopango Municipality

PA0304011093 San Salvador Radio Farabundo Marti Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Report by Dagoberto Corea]

[Text] Members of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front [FMLN] Political Committee in Ilopango on 2 April accused the Salvadoran Air Force of conducting frequent bombings in the Ilopango Lake area.

Juan Jose Flores, leader of the FMLN Municipal Political Committee in Ilopango, reported various acts of violence that occurred this week. He said a woman was found dead near the Air Force Bridge and helicopters are continuously bombing the Ilopango Lake area.

[Begin Flores recording] One of the most worrisome cases was the discovery of a dead woman near the Salvadoran Air Force Bridge on 31 March. The body was discovered in the morning. We believe the attitude of the National Police in Ilopango was malicious and worrisome, as they would not let anyone get close enough to identify the body. In fact, they tried to prevent the identification.

The second act of violence we must report in that municipality is that during the past few days the Salvadoran Air Force has been bombing the Ilopango Lake area. We believe that since the armed conflict is over—we are now in a peace process—those actions, especially the bombings by the Salvadoran Air Force, are not justified. There is no justification for those bombings.

We believe the discovery of the body creates many doubts because of the malicious attitude of the National Police agents and because the body was found in a highly militarized zone, where there is military security 24 hours a day. That body could not have just appeared. On 1 April, I personally approached the Justice of the Peace Office in Ilopango to obtain more information concerning the case and I was told by an official that the woman had not been identified because she did not carry any identification papers. I was also informed that the cause of her death was skull trauma, apparently caused by blows received from a moving vehicle. We say apparently because before going to the Justice of the Peace we had heard from witnesses that the body had bullet wounds. [end recording]

Flores also reported the persecution of members of the FMLN Political Committee in Ilopango by heavily armed men, apparently members of the death squads.

[Begin Flores recording] We are worried because there have been intimidating actions against members of the FMLN Political Committee in the municipality of Ilopango. FMLN members have been persecuted. At 2130 on 31 March a leader of the Political Committee was followed by four heavily armed men in a vehicle with tinted glass windows. Fortunately, he was not attacked because there were many people in the area. [end recording]

In view of the situation, the FMLN Political Committee demanded the intervention of the UN Observers for El Salvador to clarify the case of the woman who was found dead. They also demanded an explanation from President Cristiani on the Salvadoran Air Force bombings which, according to Flores, are causing fear and panic among the population.

Nicaragua

Chamorro Makes Statement on Release of U.S. Aid

PA0204193393 Managua Radio Nicaragua Network in Spanish 1808 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Statement by President Violeta Chamorro at the Presidential Palace in Managua—live]

[Text] [Words indistinct] I think I have good news for you. This morning, at 0800 I received a telephone call from Mr. Ronald Godard, charge d'affaires of the U.S. Embassy. He relayed to me a message from President Bill Clinton in which he informs me that the $54 million that were being withheld have been released. Aid for 1993 and 1994 has been confirmed.

I want to tell you that I never lost faith in this aid. I have faith in my people and government. [sentence indistinct] We must be more united because this aid arrived in Nicaragua today, when Catholics commemorate Friday before Holy Week. I am instilled with faith because in the small town of Rivas [words indistinct].

This aid demonstrates the support and friendship of the U.S. people and Government for the people and Government of Nicaragua.

I thank former President George Bush for his solidarity. I also thank President Bill Clinton for the solidarity I am receiving now. This aid, and the $84 million that the Italian Government has just given us, demonstrates the trust that the international community has in the democratic process of reconciliation that Violeta is implementing.

Nicaragua, my government, the Nicaraguans, are not alone. Right now, representatives of 17 countries and 11 international organizations friendly to Nicaragua, including countries in Europe, North and Central America, and Latin America, are meeting with the Paris Club, in France, and they are supporting the peace and

democratization effort that we Nicaraguans must continue to promote. I am sure that this meeting will be a success.

I was just told by telephone that Nicaragua had been asking for $140 million at the Paris Club and we already have secured $170 million. I hope we get even more.

What is the meaning of this? That there is trust in the work, in the reconciliation, in all Nicaraguans. After a war we must have unity to work and reconstruct the fatherland.

I am very satisfied with this news but do not believe that everything has been resolved. This time, the U.S. aid will allow us to increase production and to lower unemployment.

On the eve of Holy Week, I want to urge all young Nicaraguans who still carry arms in the mountains to put down their weapons, to understand that only through dialogue will we be able to understand each other. Let us realize that only by working together and by joining efforts for the sake of our fatherland will we be able to have a better Nicaragua for everybody. Thank you very much, dear people of Nicaragua, for listening to me. You, journalists, make this good news known. Thank you.

Australia Reschedules Government Debt Through 'Special Treatment' Agreement

PA0304005193 Managua LA PRENSA in Spanish 1 Apr 93 p 2

[Article by Maria Elena Palacios]

[Text] The Australian Government rescheduled Nicaragua's debt through a special treatment agreement signed between the two governments on 31 March in Mexico City, according to the Foreign Cooperation Ministry Press Department.

Nicaragua's debt with Australia is $3.3 million. According to the reschedule agreement, the debt will be paid in 25 years with a 14-year grace period and soft interest rates.

This debt rescheduling is very important for Nicaragua in the face of meetings of the consultative group and the Paris Club, the source added.

The agreement was signed by Keith William Baker, Australian ambassador to Mexico, and Jose Ernesto Fonseca Pasos, Nicaraguan ambassador to Mexico.

Australia has strongly supported Nicaragua. Its cooperation through the Action International organization to small businesses, which is being assisted by the Foundation To Support Small Businesses [Fundacion para el Apoyo de la Microempresa—FAMA], stands out at present.

The Australian Government contributed $730,000 to finance the two-year initial phase of FAMA activities (1992 and 1993).

Record demand for FAMA assistance exhausted those funds and local contributions before expected.

Australia is thus studying the possibility of offering complementary financing to provide credits to other small businesses and contribute to the country's economic development.

Government, OAS Sign Minesweeping Agreement

PA0204210793 Managua BARRICADA in Spanish 2 Apr 93 pp 1, 6

[Text] The Nicaraguan Government has signed an agreement in Washington with the OAS so that a mission of experts may come to Nicaragua and defuse about 115,000 mines that were planted around the country during the war last decade.

The agreement signed between Nicaraguan Ambassador Jose Antonio Tijerino and OAS Under Secretary Christopher Thomas stipulates the privileges and immunities OAS mission members shall enjoy.

The OAS mine sweeping experts, chosen by the Inter-American Defense Board and given previous clearance by the Nicaraguan Government, will arrive on 12 April to start training personnel.

Mine sweeping chores will begin after the OAS experts train sappers selected by the EPS [Sandinist People's Army] for the work that will probably take two years, a source from the EPS general staff announced.

For the work to be effective, the experts will assist in locating the devices planted in the mountain and border areas, with those who took part in the 10-year war.

Since the end of the war in 1990, hundreds of people and animals have suffered from these explosive devices spread throughout the Nicaraguan mountains. The mines have also prevented any work from being done in certain areas.

According to our source, the minesweeping operation will be done in stages. First priority will be given to the country's most productive areas. "Not a single mine should remain," the source added.

Nicaragua's northern zone is the greatest coffee producing area. The southern San Juan River border area is strategic to the ecology and tourist project and for African palm root production.

"This will contribute to the unity of the Nicaraguan family and to effective national reconciliation, a Foreign Ministry spokesman commented after firming up the agreement.

UNO Letter Demands Chamorro To Resume Dialogue

PA0304031493 Managua Radio Corporacion in Spanish 2200 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Text] A delegation of National Opposition Union, UNO, political parties headed by Wilfredo Navarro Moreira, Duilio Baltodano Mayorga, and Humberto

Salvador Dona arrived at the Presidency to deliver a letter demanding a dialogue with President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro.

The delegation was received by Danilo Lacayo Lanzas, presidential spokesman, instead of Jose Adan Guerra, deputy minister of the Presidency, who had been appointed by the president to receive the UNO delegation. The UNO political leaders interpreted this last-minute change as a mockery and meaning that the president is no longer interested in holding talks with UNO now that the U.S. Government has released the $54 million loan. Here is the text of the UNO letter:

Her Excellency President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro

Dear Mrs. President:

UNO hereby reiterates its willingness to participate in a frank and serious dialogue with the president of the Republic to discuss national problems and their possible solutions.

In November 1991 we proposed a dialogue between your government and our political parties. This dialogue began on 11 November 1991, but was abruptly interrupted 18 days later by the government representatives. On 20 February 1992, on occasion of the second anniversary of the 1990 electoral victory, we made a public call to resume the dialogue with UNO, which was interrupted on 24 March 1992. We informed the Nicaraguan people that our call to resume the dialogue did not end the Executive Branch's alliance with the Sandinist National Liberation Front. In a letter sent to you on 15 January 1993 we reiterated our determination to participate in a dialogue. On 28 February, in a statement read at La Republica Plaza before dozens of thousands of UNO supporters, once again we expressed our willingness to resolve national problems through the mechanism of dialogue.

UNO has maintained its willingness to participate in a dialogue despite disrespectful actions by members of your government against this alliance. The most recent of those actions was a letter dated 25 March 1993 signed by Presidency Minister Antonio Lacayo, in which he did not write the truth. In addition, Lacayo described himself as the government representative, a role that can only be played by the president of the Republic. A copy of our reply to that letter was sent to you.

In August 1989 you committed yourself to the UNO National Political Committee to implement our program for a Government of National Salvation if selected presidential candidate by the council. On February 1990, as UNO candidate, you signed with our vice presidential candidate Virgilio Godoy, a commitment to the National Political Council to create a government representing the UNO political parties. The solution of national problems demand full compliance with both commitments, which has not occurred thus far.

Nicaragua is facing a profound institutional, political, economic, and social crisis three years after the electoral victory of UNO and its candidates. Therefore, all those who promised the Nicaraguan people we would make democratic changes in the country should immediately seek solutions for their problems. Consequently, we demand that the dialogue between UNO and your excellency begin as soon as possible.

[Signed] Expressing our consideration and respect, we remain,
Sincerely,

UNO National Political Council:
National Conservative Party
Neo-Liberal Party
Conservative Popular Alliance
Communist Party of Nicaragua
Nicaraguan Democratic Movement
Christian Democratic Union
Social Democratic Party
Liberal Constitutionalist Party
National Action Party
Independent Liberal Party

Panama

Endara, Government Parties Decide Not To Approve Amnesty Bill

PA0204210593 Panama City EL PANAMA AMERICA in Spanish 2 Apr 93 p 1a

[Report by Carlos Vargas]

[Text] President Guillermo Endara and the leaders of the progovernment political parties decided at a meeting that they would not approve an amnesty bill despite pressure by the Revolutionary Democratic Party [PRD] on the Legislative Assembly.

A Presidency bulletin discloses that Endara, the political parties that support his administration, and the National Assembly board of directors, "unanimously agreed" not to evaluate an amnesty in light of the incidents at the Legislative Palace that were encouraged by PRD supporters.

The pronouncement states that "It is impossible to evaluate or approve any law, especially an amnesty bill, under pressure and threats of violence."

This week, PRD supporters took over the National Assembly visitors galleries to demand an amnesty bill. On 31 March, PRD Legislator Miguel Bush instigated the knocking down of a door leading to the Legislative Palace.

The Legislative Assembly board of directors and the Christian Democratic Party [PDC] bloc announced on 1 April, in a communique, that the National Assembly would not continue to meet "under circumstances that include violence, duress, or threats" aimed at influencing the legislators' decisions."

Both announcements were made after the 1 April session could not proceed as a result of what has been described

as PRD bloc "intransigence" because they refused to withdraw posters calling for the approval of an amnesty bill.

The PRD bloc decided to leave the posters despite the Assembly having approved, by majority vote, that the placards be removed.

The 1 April Assembly session included discussions on a censure vote against Education Minister Marcos Alarcon Palomino.

PDC Legislator Gabriel Arosemena requested from Debate President Roberto Garibaldi that the PRD legislators remove the posters because it would set a precedent for others to follow during future sessions.

"You (the PRD block) continue to obstruct the assembly's duties" Garibaldo warned the PRD bloc which on more than one occasion was called to obey the decision by the majority of the assembly legislators.

Fifteen minutes after the debates started, Garibaldo called a recess that lasted for several hours. During this break, the progovernment parties and the PDC decided to prepare their respective communiques condemning the position adopted by the PRD legislators.

While the recess was in progress, PRD activists reentered the assembly debate area to pressure the legislators into passing the amnesty bill.

The PRD activists continued to shout insults and abusive remarks at government and PDC legislators.

The National Assembly board of directors announced in a communique that "they will not respond to petitions or requests that may represent an impairment of the legal system."

During a news conference last night, Assembly President Lucas Zarak indicated that "we will not work under duress."

Zarak warned that the National Assembly would not continue to meet in session as long as the PRD pressure tactics persist.

On the other hand, the PDC bloc announced that the Legislative Branch "has been unable to function normally as a result of the intransigence of the PRD legislators and their mobs who seek to impose the amnesty bill discussions through threats of violence and duress.

"We reiterate that in no democratic parliament is it possible to discuss rationally and decide any issue under conditions of violence, duress, and threats" the PDC communique points out.

The National Assembly board of directors is preparing to meet on 2 April. This meeting will take place only if circumstances allow it. The first call to session is scheduled to take place at 0900 in the morning and the second call will take place at 1000.

It was also agreed that there will be no plenary sessions during Holy Week scheduled to begin on 5 April.

'Vacation' Order Against Chiriqui District Attorney Rescinded

PA0204201193 Panama City EL PANAMA AMERICA in Spanish 2 Apr 93 p 8c

[Excerpt] Acting Attorney General Jorge Valdes rescinded the vacation order issued to Chiriqui District Attorney Emilio de Leon. At the same time, it was disclosed that two more district attorneys will be removed in the next few hours.

A source close to the Attorney General's Office disclosed that the vacation order was withdrawn on the afternoon of 31 March several hours before it had been sent to District Attorney de Leon.

Likewise, investigations carried out by LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Chiriqui state that District Attorney de Leon was still in his office on 1 April and proceeded to conduct a second inquiry into Bocas de Toro Customs Director Belarmino Chavez. [passage omitted]

Aeroflot Begins Flights From Moscow to Havana, Managua

PA0204182893 Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish 2 Apr 93 p 40

[Article by Emilio Sinclair]

[Text] Aeroflot, the airline founded during the era of the now defunct USSR, has begun flying to the Republic of Panama.

The airline, with headquarters in Moscow, Russia, landed its first plane here: a commercial flight from Havana, Cuba.

The plane, an Ilyushin under the command of Captain Anatoliy Fiyonov, landed in the early hour mornings of 1 April with 97 passengers, of whom 19 stayed in Panama. The rest traveled to Managua, Nicaragua.

The first passenger to set foot on Panamanian soil after the Aeroflot plane landed was Leonid Spektor.

Aeroflot will initially fly to Panama every Thursday, with flights taking off from Moscow and stopping in Shannon, Ireland; Havana, Panama, and Managua.

The flight will return from Managua to Panama, Havana, Shannon, and Moscow.

Alejandro Tarada, Aeroflot manager in Panama, and Vladimir Butov, regional representative of the airline, were at the airport to welcome the first Aeroflot flight. Also on hand were Bernardo Diaz de Icaza, administrative deputy director general, and Jorge Garcia, director of air transportation, both from the Civil Aeronautics Department.

Aeroflot Manager Alejandro Tarada said that with the arrival of this plane in Panama the doors are open for people "to know our people, our history, and our country: Russia."

Argentina

Economic Programming Secretary Rejects U.S. Statement on Protectionism

PY0304023793 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 0002 GMT 3 Apr 93

[Text] Buenos Aires, 2 Apr (TELAM)—Economic Programming Secretary Juan Llach today rejected a U.S. Government statement that Argentina is among the most protectionist countries. He stated: "Few countries offer an economic opening like Argentina."

Llach said international commerce "assigns the worst designation to Argentina" because of other countries' protectionist policies. He described the United States and the EC as the ones most responsible for this commercial policy.

He also reported that, according to official estimates, the Argentine trade balance surplus reportedly will register a $180 million deficit in January, with a 15 percent increase in exports and 13 percent in imports.

Llach termed Argentina's growing exports as "promising," and stated that the final January figures will be released in the next few days.

Di Tella Cited on Falklands Negotiations With Britain

PY0204142893 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 2256 GMT 1 Apr 93

[Text] Buenos Aires, 1 April (NA)—Foreign Minister Guido di Tella today said that the Argentine Government "is not interested" in arranging a visit by President Carlos Menem to Great Britain before "substantial conversations are held" with British authorities.

He said: "If there is oil, money and discussions follow." He thus alluded to the negotiations he held this week during an unofficial visit to Great Britain. He made it clear that oil exploration "can be conducted only with Argentine cooperation."

Di Tella termed "very positive" his meetings with the various representatives of the Malvinas Islands, despite the fact that the official sector rejected the invitation by a three votes to two. He said that the conversations with his British counterpart Douglas Hurd and former Malvinas Islands Governor Rex Hunt were good.

Di Tella negotiated in London with the "harder" sectors. He said that "it is always positive to be heard, even if there is disagreement," adding that by mid-1993 he will return to Great Britain to "continue the talks on the Malvinas Islands, petroleum, and fishing."

"We have noted a change of attitude among islanders. They have enjoyed an economic boom over the past few years. Their position is more commercial and they now want to know the Argentine proposal, aside from the sovereignty issue," he said.

He remarked that Hunt, who was the Malvinas Islands' governor when the war broke out in 1982, told the British media that one of the islanders' concerns "is that they are afraid of being seduced by the Argentine, because they are more experienced and very astute."

Di Tella said that Argentina "is not interested" in having President Menem visit Great Britain while there are "substantive conversations to be held," adding that he and Economy Minister Domingo Cavallo might visit London late this year.

Di Tella said that the British estimate that "a generation must pass" before the wounds caused by the Malvinas war can heal, noting that this is a period of "approximately 25 years."

"I talked about the alleged executions of Argentine soldiers during the Falklands War with Tristan Garel Jones, who is in charge of Latin American affairs, and I told him I trust the equanimity of the investigations that are being conducted. I also conveyed to him Argentina's predisposition to help conclude the investigations," he said.

Di Tella said that the executions were "unfortunate, but we do not yet know the extent of the issue." He said there is a British "lobby" [preceding word in English] that wants the "investigations to be fully concluded."

Concerning the oil prospecting that two British enterprises are performing, Di Tella said that exploitation "will be impossible without Argentine approval," and reiterated the threat to "take legal action before international courts."

He said that the oil enterprises "are pressuring London" to reach an agreement with Argentina, "because no one is willing to invest hundreds of millions of dollars" in a project that may go wrong.

Regarding fishing in the South Atlantic, the minister said that a new round of talks will be held by midyear. He said that the Argentine position "is to increase fishing, through commercial rather than predatory fishing."

"We want the exploitation of fishing resources to be proportional to the population of each side, to the number of workers directly involved in the activity, and to the level of infrastructure. Even if we only consider Tierra del Fuego and Santa Cruz, there is a big difference in our favor," he said.

He said that military ship movements in the area near the Malvinas Islands can return to "full normalcy" following "an exchange of high-ranking military officers, which will increase mutual confidence."

Kelpers Position on Making 'Contact' With Government Noted

PY0204162093 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 1930 GMT 1 Apr 93

[Text] Buenos Aires, 1 April (TELAM)—The Kelpers will only make "contact" with the Argentine Government when the latter "renounces its claim of sovereign rights" over the islands.

Their stance on this issue was made public in a brief communique issued by the "Falklands" (Malvinas) Executive Council in Great Britain.

The communique was released today to the British and Argentine press, five days after they refused to meet with Foreign Minister Guido di Tella in London. It states: "Under no circumstances do we wish to become part of Argentina."

Congressional Elections To Be Held 3 Oct

PY0204160293 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 2358 GMT 1 Apr 93

[Excerpt] Buenos Aires, 1 Apr (NA)—The cabinet today decided that Congressional elections will be held nationwide on 3 October.

This was reported by Interior Minister Gustavo Beliz at the end of a cabinet meeting at the Olivos residence with the participation of President Carlos Menem.

It was learned that the most convenient date for the elections was chosen. Initially 26 September or early October were considered but 3 October was chosen to give the political parties time to hold their internal elections.

It has been learned unofficially that the president was annoyed with the attitude assumed by eight Justicialist Party deputies from the union sector of the party who did not attend [a session of Congress] thus preventing a debate on the security social reform bill for lack of quorum.

Beliz said the government "will in no way" relinquish its intention of getting the lower chamber to approve the bill. He highlighted the attitude of the congressmen who attended the session "without any intention of supporting our project." [passage omitted]

Bolivia

Chamber of Deputies Modifies 3 Articles of Electoral Law

PY0204215993 La Paz Television Nacional Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Excerpts] The electoral calendar has been slightly modified because, at the request of the National Electoral Board, the Chamber of Deputies has modified three articles of the Electoral Law that will regulate this year's elections.

The Chamber of Deputies worked for two hours to modify Article 144 of the Electoral Law and some other aspects of the law.

Here are the modifications:

The electoral campaign can continue until 24 hours before the elections begin.

The deadline to present the lists of candidates for the Senate and Chamber of Deputies to the National Electoral Board is 16 April.

The names of replacements must be specified in the lists of candidates. [passage omitted]

The deadline to present the lists of candidates for the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, therefore, has been postponed until 16 April. Other modifications also have been made to the 1993 elections calendar.

Switzerland Pardons $50-Million Debt

PY0304141393 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1739 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Text] Bern, 2 April (EFE)—Switzerland and Bolivia today signed an agreement providing for the forgiveness of the external debt Bolivia had contracted with Switzerland, which amounts to 53.1 Swiss francs (some $50 million). Bolivian President Jaime Paz Zamora, on a state visit to Switzerland, termed the agreement "exemplary."

During a news conference, Paz Zamora said that he cherished the hope that other creditors will follow suit.

According to Franz Blankart, Swiss secretary of state, the agreement proves that a country with a democratic system of government and a sound economy may be put on its feet if its external debt is canceled, and that "this example should serve as a precedent."

The agreement also provides that Bolivia establish a fund to finance programs to protect the environment and bolster small-scale enterprises and cottage industries.

On the occasion of its 700th anniversary as a confederation, for the first time Switzerland has pardoned a debt.

Paz Zamora said that Bolivia does not wish to continue to be a recipient of development cooperation but to become an interlocutor with other countries on an equal basis.

Since he came to power, inflation in Bolivia has dropped to 8 percent, and the total foreign debt was reduced by half; it now stands at approximately $2 billion.

In Bern, the Bolivian president met with Swiss Confederation President Adolf Ogi, Foreign Minister Flavio Cotti, and Public Economy Minister Jean-Pascal Delamuraz [all titles as received]. These contacts, the president said, demonstrates "the level our bilateral relations have reached."

Paz Zamora praised Swiss cooperation with Bolivia that is directly aimed at the poorest classes. He also said the structural reforms in Bolivia and he asked for an increase of private investments.

Delamuraz expressed the Swiss Government's will to invest in Bolivia, and both countries signed a declaration of intent on economic cooperation. They also expressed their will to reach an agreement to prevent double taxation.

Cotti congratulated the Bolivian president for his efforts in drug enforcement given that 1,400 clandestine laboratories were dismantled and 10 tons of cocaine were confiscated in 1992.

Brazil

Foreign Minister Refutes U.S. Trade Sanction 'Threat'

PY0204173593 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1653 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Text] Brasilia, 2 Apr (EFE)—Brazilian Foreign Minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso today refuted a U.S. threat to implement trade sanctions against Brazil, as stated in a report released this week by the U.S. Foreign Trade Secretariat.

"Brazilian Government decisions are made according to national interests," Cardoso, 61, stated. He added that he is not worried over an eventual enforcement of trade sanctions by the United States.

The U.S. report, which mentions 44 countries, criticizes Brazil over alleged unfair trade practices like high tariff barriers and for not having approved an industrial property law that acknowledges the patents claimed by other countries.

Cardoso told the media that the Brazilian Government is rapidly opening its market and an industrial property bill is being discussed in Congress.

"Brazil is negotiating the bill according to its interests. If the Americans do not like it, they can apply sanctions," Cardoso said.

The Brazilian Government also refuted criticism leveled this week at the annual meeting of the IDB board of governors in Hamburg by U.S. Treasury Under Secretary Lawrence Summers who referred to Brazilian economic problems.

In an official message, the Brazilian Government said it is aware of the challenges that the economic reactivation implies, including a better distribution of wealth among society. It also mentions achievements like the fiscal reform, the privatization of public companies, and the renegotiation of the foreign debt.

Cordoso 'Not Worried' About Retaliation

PY0304004893 Sao Paulo O ESTADO DE SAO PAULO in Portuguese 2 Apr 93 Economy and Business Section p 7

[Article by Vania Cristino]

[Text] Brasilia—Foreign Minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso yesterday refuted criticisms made by the U.S. Government of Brazil's trade policy. Cardoso believes Brazil is opening its market to international trade quite rapidly. Minister Cardoso answered a report released by the White House foreign trade office (USTR) [U.S. trade representative], accusing Brazil of unfair trade practices, in addition to pointing out various faults in the draft law that regulates industrial property—the patents law being debated in Congress.

Cardoso is not worried about eventual retaliation against Brazil by the U.S. Government. According to Cardoso, the U.S. actions on the patents issue were expected and are based on U.S. trade legislation (Section 301 of that legislation demands sanctions against countries that do not protect industrial property).

According to Cardoso, Brazil will make decisions according to the national interest. He added: "If the United States does not accept it, it can retaliate." The main U.S. criticisms of the patents law are the bureaucratic demands that are considered excessive and expensive and the lack of protection for pharmaceutical products patents.

Planning Minister on Controlling Inflation

PY0204144993 Brasilia Radio Nacional da Amazonia Network in Portuguese 1030 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Text] Planning Minister Yeda Crusius has said that inflation can only be controlled through a fiscal reform deeper than the emergency one. The minister added that state and national administrations must put their houses in order and pay their debts to the federal government. Crusius said that negotiations with the Brazilian creditor banks will be concluded before June when contracts for the renegotiation of the national foreign debt will be signed.

Deputy Delfim Neto has said that the country needs a more rational tax system, adding that the government must collect enough resources to fairly meet its constitutional commitments. In an address before the congressional investigating committee of the Senate that is looking into tax evasion, he said Brazil must begin its fiscal reorganization from scratch because there is no system of taxation in the country any longer.

Franco To Send Congress Bill Establishing Space Agency

PY0204220693 Rio de Janeiro Rede Globo Television in Portuguese 1615 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Text] President Itamar Franco reported this morning that he will send a bill to Congress establishing the Brazilian Space Agency.

President Franco attended the launching of the VS-40 rocket at the Alcantara launch pad in Maranhao State. This was the last test before the construction of a rocket to launch Brazilian satellites to outer space, which probably will be constructed before 1995.

Police Disband 'Important' Drug-Distributing Organization

PY0204175793 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1544 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Text] Rio de Janeiro, 2 Apr (EFE)—It was reported here today that the Brazilian Federal Police have disbanded an important drug-distributing organization in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo and confiscated, on 1 April, 60 kg of cocaine and weapons that allegedly belonged to a Peruvian guerrilla group.

Beside the drug, which came from Bolivia, the police discovered ammunition, automatic guns, and a Brazilian-made URU machine gun in a house in western Sao Paulo that acted as the headquarters of the organization.

According to the police report, the weapons once belonged to the Brazilian Armed Forces but they are registered as having been diverted to armed guerrillas in Peru.

Mauro Orini, the chief of the disbanded organization who escaped two years ago from the Campinas penitentiary where he was sentenced for drug trafficking, said he bought the weapons on the black market in Sao Paulo.

The drug-trafficking gang transported the drug inside truck tires undiscovered from the Brazilian borders with Bolivia or Paraguay to the consumer markets in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

The police arrested two other gang members, one of them a driver who transported the drug. His name was not made public.

Chile

Visiting Venezuelan Foreign Minister Rules Out Another Coup Attempt

PY0204174293 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2359 GMT 1 Apr 93

[Excerpt] Santiago, 1 Apr (EFE)—Venezuelan Foreign Minister Fernando Ochoa has ruled out the possibility of another coup attempt in his country because the people flatly rejected the military uprisings.

In an interview published today by the local evening newspaper LA SEGUNDA, Ochoa said: "The Armed Forces have realized that this is not the way. Last year's unfortunate process has been overcome."

Ochoa, who on 31 March began a four-day official visit to Chile, said that Venezuela "is experiencing a difficult, complex political crisis which I believe stems from growth. Our economic crisis and the development of our democracy provoked the military crisis."

Ochoa added that the uprisings of 4 February and 27 November 1992 provoked "a grave, delicate situation that put stability in jeopardy, but we overcame it because the people demonstrated their desire for democracy. Venezuela is now firmly moving toward the December electoral process."

Ochoa added: "That will be an excellent opportunity to elect the successor of President Carlos Andres Perez and to initiate a process of political change that would preclude situations like the ones we have endured." [passage omitted]

Silva Cimma, Venezuelan Counterpart Condemn 'Scourge' of Corruption

PY0304014693 Santiago Radio Cooperativa Network in Spanish 2300 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Text] The Chilean and Venezuelan foreign ministers, Enrique Silva Cimma and Fernando Ochoa, respectively, said today that only stable democratic systems can fight against the scourge of corruption.

The two foreign ministers condemned corruption because it hurts political systems in this continent and the world. We put this issue on the agenda in light of the concern existing in the country due to the crisis created by corruption in important countries such as Italy and Peru and which also affects Venezuela, admitted Ochoa, who concluded his visit to Chile after a news conference today. Ochoa said that in Latin America the dictatorial regimes resorted to corruption. He said democracies are open in their system:

[Begin recording] I believe the important thing to do for democracy is to improve the management of public money and that the political leadership understands that one of the demands currently being made by society is to have clear management of public money. [end recording]

Ochoa also said: A stable democratic political system based on good economic grounds would be a good contribution to stop this vice.

Foreign Minister Enrique Silva Cimma also talked about corruption along the same lines. He said:

[Begin recording] It is easier to discover cases of corruption under a democracy than under a dictatorship because under a dictatorship corruption is concealed, and one of the good aspects of democracy is that corruption cannot be concealed under this system; on the contrary, they are reported to implement the necessary corrective measures. The important thing is that democracy should be capable of fighting corruption. In this regard, one of the greatest challenges in Latin America is to build effective democracies. [end recording]

Ochoa concluded by saying that the corruption accepted by past dictatorships created a corrupt mentality among public officials, but this mentality is disappearing with a new society that is making honesty a sustainable social value.

Silva Cimma Says 'No Change' in Position on Bolivian Landlocked Situation

PY0204161193 Santiago Television Nacional de Chile Imagen Internacional in Spanish 0100 GMT 2 Mar 93

[Text] Foreign Minister Enrique Silva Cimma said today that there is no change in the Chilean position regarding the Bolivian landlocked situation.

This is how Silva Cimma answered recent remarks by Bolivian President Jaime Paz Zamora to this television station in Germany.

During his European tour Bolivian President Paz Zamora said that a more favorable atmosphere is emerging in Chile for solving his country's demands of a sea outlet.

[Begin recording] [unidentified reporter] Has this issue been discussed with Chilean officials recently?
[Paz Zamora] We are always talking about it. I understand there are obstacles that prevent Chilean authorities from acting as they would like to. [end recording]

Today Silva Cimma briefly referred to this issue, saying that there is no change in the Chilean position. He added that the Bolivian president always makes sympathetic comments in view of Chile's considerate stance regarding Bolivian problems. [sentence as heard]

Manuel Rodriguez Front Suspected in Attack on Air Force NCO

PY0204220893 Santiago LA NACION in Spanish 29 Mar 93 p 13

[Text] Chile's Air Force [FACh] has issued an official communique stating that a FACh technical sergeant was attacked by a group of people who fired some shots at him. The communique further states that one of the attackers "was thought to be a Manuel Rodriguez Front member" and had an extensive police record—three arrest warrants have been issued against him for armed robbery and violation of the Antiterrorist Law, besides three injunctions for participating in similar actions.

The name of the NCO who was attacked and shot when he was driving his taxi is Juan Isaac Albarran. He was hit by six bullets and is in critical condition.

The aforementioned attacker, who was wounded when Albarran repelled the attack using his own gun, was identified as Luis Armando Orellana. He escaped but died at some relatives' house.

Lautaro Rebel, Popular Front Second in Command Remarks on Group's Status

PY0204202593 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 2 Apr 93

[Report by Gerardo Beltran]

[Excerpt] Delfin Diaz Quezada, detained by the Investigative Police and placed at the disposal of Trial Judge Arnoldo Dreyse, has been actively engaged in planning and coordinating terrorist actions.

Diaz was the second in command of a subversive group. He was commanding the Lautaro Rebel and Popular Front, an elite structure within this movement.

Diaz was arrested by intelligence agents from the 2d Investigative Police Precinct during an operation implemented more than a year ago.

It was reported that policemen hoped to catch Diaz while meeting with Lautaro Group top leader Guillermo Ossandon, also known as Diego Carvajal, but the arrest was carried out earlier for security reasons.

Diaz made exclusive remarks to Radio Chilena. Upon leaving the police precinct to go to court, Diaz shouted some of his movement's slogans. He said his movement is very well prepared for combat.

Diaz added that Diego Carvajal continues struggling and he harbors serious doubts about the way in which Norma Vergara Caceres, also known as the Girl, died.

[Begin recording] [Diaz, shouting] [words indistinct]

[First unidentified reporter] Delfin Diaz, what is your opinion of your group's current status?

[Second unidentified reporter] What is the Lautaro Group's current status? Why don't you answer?
[Diaz] Because I don't know you.

[Second reporter] What's happening with Carvajal?
[Diaz] He ought to be fighting. He must be fighting.

[Second reporter] Will he be detained?
[Diaz] (?This possibility) has always been there.

[Second reporter] Apart from you, will many people now be caught?
[Diaz] Absolutely not.

[Second reporter] How do you stand now?
[Diaz] We are standing. We continue to exist and we continue to struggle.

[First reporter] Delfin Diaz, what is your opinion about Norma Vergara's death?
[Diaz] I have my doubts. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Columbia

Bomb Explodes in Cartagena; No Casualties Reported

PA0304015093 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 0000 GMT 3 Apr 93

[Report by Mercedes Susana Romero]

[Text] A medium-intensity bomb just exploded outside Cartagena, prompting the authorities to be on maximum alert. The city, which receives the largest number of tourists during Holy Week, was the target of a terrorist wave. This recent attack raises to three the number of bomb attacks.

[Begin recording] [Romero] The authorities in Cartagena and Bolivar ordered an increase of street patrols in the city and strategic sites, in view of the two attacks reported on the night of 1 April in the Bocagrande tourist sector and one reported this morning in Turbaco. The losses from the explosion in Bocagrande left one person dead and property damage estimated at 10 million pesos. The explosion of a 1 kg ammonia bomb in Turbaco Municipality offices only caused property damage.

[Bolivar Police Commander Alvaro Esguerra] So far, no subversive or common crime group has claimed responsibility for the bombings. We do not know what may have prompted it.

[Romero] The Cartagena Municipality on 2 April offered a reward of 20 million pesos to anyone who reports the location of explosives to the authorities. The authorities feel the goal of these attacks is to spread panic during the upcoming Holy Week season. [end recording]

Pepes Announces Renewal of Terrorist Activities

PA0404183893 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 1800 GMT 4 Apr 93

[Text] The Pepes [Persecuted by Pablo Escobar] have just announced the renewal of their terrorist activities. The Pepes say they will be merciless against Pablo Escobar and anyone they consider his friend or ally. The Pepes sent a message to the media announcing that they will begin their terrorist activities against the Medellin Cartel's leader and his friends.

In their communique, they mention alleged contacts between the attorney general, the prosecutor general, the Catholic Church and Pablo Escobar. They consider these contacts to be unacceptable. In their opinion, such meetings grant special treatment. The communique announced the end of the suspension of activities the group called about a month ago to allow Pablo Escobar to surrender to the authorities.

Chief of Medellin Cartel Gunmen Surrenders

PA0304004193 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 0000 GMT 3 Apr 93

[Report by Maribel Osorio in Medellin]

[Text] Another Medellin Cartel member has surrendered to the authorities in Medellin, Antioquia Department. He is Jorge de Jesus Pizano Santamaria, who is charged with homicide, terrorism, and collusion. Pizano Santamaria has also been identified as one of the men responsible for the car bombs that have exploded in Santa Fe de Bogota.

Pizano Santamaria has resumed the series of surrenders that have been suspended since 1 March. He is considered one of the middle-ranking commanders who rose within the ranks due to the deaths and surrenders of various leaders. He eventually became chief of the gunmen at the cartel's service and was listed as such in an organization chart recently discovered by the authorities.

According to the organization chart, Pizano Santamaria, (Ilen) Antonio Acevedo, also known as La Chepa, Fernando Leon Londono Velasquez, Robin Eulogio Munoz Mosquera, and Alfonso Leon Puerta Munoz make up Escobar's new military group.

He is charged with collusion and terrorism. The former police lieutenant surrendered to the regional district attorney at Los Matasanos, Barbosa Municipality on 2 April. Twenty Medellin Cartel men have surrendered so far to the authorities.

Although lawyers say the authorities' numerous operations have precluded Pablo Escobar's surrender, no one rules out the surrender of various middle-level commanders in the near future.

Authorities Arrest Rebel Commander Contreras

PA0304015793 Santa Fe de Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 0000 GMT 3 Apr 93

[Text] The Army captured two rebel chieftains on 2 April in Santander Department. One of them is responsible for the murder of several police officers in Arauca Department and the hijacking of an airplane, and the other is responsible for the death of several children in El Carmen De Chucuri.

Luis Carlos Contreras Osorio, charged with participating in the kidnapping of three soldiers of the National Army 11 months ago in Arauca Department, was captured in Bucaramanga. Troops of the Metropolitan Police intelligence corps staged an operation in Cabecera Del Llano neighborhood and captured Contreras Osorio.

The captured [illegible]oluntarily stated he participated in and directed th[illegible]king of the Aerotaca airlines plane HK-2760, which was covering the route between Yopal and Tame on 16 May. Privates Jose Rene Pena and Enrique Ceron and soldier (Fran Quilagos), members of the Reveis Pizarro Battalion, were on that flight. The soldiers were tortured and murdered by four kidnappers who identified themselves as members of the Army of National Liberation.

Three days later, the airplane was found hidden under the brush in a rural area of Puerto Rondon and was recovered by the National Army.

Apparently, the chief of the People's Militias of San Vicente De Chucuri was also captured in Barrancabermeja. According to the authorities, he is responsible for an attack on an Army patrol one year ago in the urban area of San Vicente in which three minors were killed.

* Overview of Potential Candidates' Positions

93SM0207A Santa Fe de Bogota CROMOS in Spanish 15 Mar 93 pp 17-22

[Excerpts] Less than one year before the presidential elections the range of candidates, potential candidates, and possible candidates to replace President Cesar Gaviria is growing larger every day. CROMOS has reviewed the political records of the following seven candidates and asked them about the four subjects which most concern the country. In their answers several similarities in their viewpoints were noted:

- Most of the views expressed were based on the alleged failures of the present government.
- They call for the internationalization of the drug problem.
- They advocate continuing to fight against narcotics terrorism.
- They point to the possibility of engaging in a dialogue

with the guerrillas, if, but only if, the various subversive movements display a real desire for peace.

Although views were divided in the economic field, especially concerning what is referred to as the opening up of the economy, there is a consensus on the system of justice in terms of the effectiveness of the present system and the imperative need to strengthen it.

The following summaries give us the impression that we were reading the same program, drafted by seven different authors. Are they in favor of continuity? Are they innovators? Are they orthodox in their approach? Judge for yourselves.

Humberto De la Calle Lombana
Name: Humberto De la Calle Lombana
Age: 47
Party affiliation: Liberal
Marital status: Married
Present (or previous) position: Minister in the Department of Government
Other positions: National registrar of civil status, member of the Supreme Court of Justice

Narcotics trafficking: the distinction between the narcotics traffic and narcotics terrorism is a valid one. Colombia has the right to demand that the international community shall not merely call for the repression of the narcotics traffic. We should go more deeply into cultural, medical, economic, and social aspects of the narcotics traffic to ensure its eradication or, at least, to reduce narcotics consumption. Legalization of drug abuse is not a solution which can be adopted by itself. We must continue fighting against narcotics terrorism to defeat it. I support the policy of demanding the defeat of the narcotics traffickers.

Guerrilla activity: the activities of the public security forces and the efforts being made by the judicial system to fight against guerrilla activity should be strengthened in a context of strict respect for human rights. Although I see no room for a dialogue in the immediate future, I do not reject the possibility of a negotiated solution if it brings an end to kidnapping, generalized searches, and extortion. I would be prepared to begin negotiations on the basis of a short and strict program, with a well defined agenda.

The economy: Progress toward opening up the economy and stabilizing macroeconomic management should be consolidated to avoid surprises in the private sector. Negative developments in the agrarian sector should be corrected. Excessive foreign exchange income from the Cusiana area should be seized by the government.

System of justice: I support the establishment of the Office of the Attorney General. There should be an improvement in investigative methods, particularly in the struggle against corruption. There should be changes in the evaluation of evidence obtained in the course of investigations, with emphasis on the analysis of evidence and on criminal conduct. [passage omitted]

Juan Gomez Martinez
Name: Juan Gomez Martinez
Age 59
Party affiliation: Conservative
Marital status: Married
Present (or previous) position: Governor of the Department of Antioquia
Other positions: Senator, former member of the Constituent Assembly

Narcotics trafficking: in this area many errors have been made which have hampered the process of bringing narcotics traffickers to justice. These errors have brought periods of relative calm. Narcotics trafficking is a worldwide crime and, as such, should be simultaneously attacked at its natural sources of production, distribution, and consumption.

Guerrilla activity: after the possibilities for civilian solutions have been exhausted and if the guerrillas do not show any desire to lay down their arms and resume their place in society, the course which should be followed includes strengthening the armed forces and carrying out military operations. Nevertheless, the door should always be left open for a dialogue.

The economy: for the economy to follow through the processes of internationalization and modernization, we should improve our productive structure and increase and diversify nontraditional exports, as well as broaden our economic foundations. The economy should take into account the productive sector, the stimulation of employment, and an increase in the foreign exchange of the country, to be used for social investment.

System of justice: the state must regain its capacity to punish promptly and effectively those engaged in criminal conduct. Only in this way can we regain national peace, bringing an end to behavior involving the violation of the law with impunity. In this way we will reestablish, once and for all, the minimum and basic conditions needed to establish a system of democracy with absolute social justice.

Juan Diego Jaramillo
Name: Juan Diego Jaramillo
Age: 43
Party affiliation: Conservative
Marital status: Married
Present (or previous) position: Columnist for EL TIEMPO
Other positions: Colombian ambassador to the General Assembly of the UN, minister plenipotentiary at the Colombian Embassy in Washington

Narcotics trafficking: we must distinguish narcotics trafficking from narcotics terrorism. The former is an economic crime for which there is no adequate punishment in the countries which consume drugs. The latter is a terrible crime which cannot be a subject for political bargaining.

Guerrilla activity: a dialogue is a Greek invention to find out what the truth is. As such, it is a noble instrument of

human intelligence. In Colombia, 10 years of dialogue have covered the country with blood, and this policy has lost its effectiveness. Now it is the mission of the armed forces, which cannot be changed, to reestablish peace through the legitimate use of force.

The economy: the objective of any economy should be to achieve a high rate of growth, without inflation. The present government has failed to achieve this objective. The only way to reestablish the pace of growth is to reduce the size of the state and to simulate private investment. To achieve that, we should reduce taxes, eliminate red tape, and privatize companies which are losing money. The present system of tax reform has achieved quite the opposite: it has taken 100.6 billion Colombian pesos away from the productive sector and given them to the unproductive sector. This has contributed to corruption through the use of allowances.

System of justice: justice means applying the law. Since the law is only applied in Colombia to people in the countryside, while political criminals and terrorists see their sentences reduced, the law has lost the sense that it is applicable to all persons. Plea bargaining is leading to an alarming increase in violations of the law which go unpunished.

Carlos Lemos Simmonds
Name: Carlos Lemos Simmonds
Age: 59
Party affiliation: Liberal
Marital status: Married
Present (or previous) position: Member of the City Council of Santa Fe de Bogota
Other positions: Minister of foreign affairs, Minister in the Department of Government

Narcotics trafficking: I would propose holding an international conference to reach a definitive decision on whether to fight against narcotics trafficking with the same degree of intensity in all countries, against all drug cartels—or whether to look for a different solution so that it will not be just Colombia which runs all the risks. Narcotics terrorism is something else: it is something against which we cannot give ground.

Guerrilla activity: the guerrilla movements have declared war against the Colombian state and against our citizens. Both of them should respond with the weapons which the constitution places at their disposal. The dialogues which have been held have proved how useless they are, because they have only served to strengthen the guerrilla movements. Engaging in a dialogue with the guerrilla movements is improper and immoral, because these groups have become one more example of common crime.

The economy: we should restore productive capacity in the rural areas of the country. To do this, I propose a new, agrarian reform, based on an increase in production. We must make our agricultural products competitive. We must work on our highway infrastructure, to bring our industries closer to the oceans and create an economy which generates jobs.

System of justice: I am happy to see that the government has done something about which I have spoken several times: paying the judges well. That action ensures better performance by the system of justice. However, it will also be necessary to make justice more substantive and less procedural. The excess of procedural activity has led to inaction and to allowing criminals to escape without being punished. Investigative activity has been increased with the establishment of the Office of the Attorney General. [passage omitted]

Antonio Jose Navarro Wolff
Name: Antonio Jose Navarro Wolff
Age: 44
Party affiliation: M-19 [19 April Movement] Democratic Alliance
Marital status: Separated
Present (or previous) position: President of the M-19 Democratic Alliance
Other positions: Minister of health

Narcotics trafficking: in Colombia a policy of requiring people to submit to the system of justice should be implemented. This policy should be followed up from the office of the president throughout his term. At the same time and as part of a strategy of agrarian development, we should encourage the cultivation of substitute crops. Abroad we should support the concept of decriminalizing drug consumption in the context of a multilateral policy against narcotics trafficking.

Guerrilla activity: our position is in favor of negotiations leading to an armistice. For this purpose we should make use of national and international mediation. We need to organize a movement to exert pressure on those involved in the war to accept a resumption of negotiations.

The economy: we support the internationalization of the economy, using the criteria of selectivity, bilateral and multilateral negotiations, economic integration by stages, and balancing the external and internal sectors of the economy. Economic policy should be based on production, not speculation. To do this, we believe that it is necessary to have specific policies for the agricultural and industrial sectors and for the informal [illegal] sectors of the economy.

System of justice: the constitution provides for the reorganization of the judicial branch of the government. That process should be continued and deepened, emphasizing a positive concept of law, rather than the traditional, formal vision of the judicial hierarchy. [passage omitted]

Andres Pastrana Arango
Name: Andres Pastrana Arango
Age: 38
Party affiliation: Conservative
Marital status: Married
Present (or previous position): Senator
Other positions: Mayor of Bogota, member of the City Council of Bogota

Narcotics trafficking: the narcotics traffic is linked to drug addiction. Contrary to what many people believe, Colombia also has this problem. Therefore, we have tried to encourage foreign countries to begin an educational and preventive campaign, rather than fighting against the narcotics traffic as such. This does not mean that no effort is being made to deal with this problem.

Guerrilla activity: I advocate seeking a solution, while demanding that the guerrillas surrender their arms and release all persons under detention. That is the only way of achieving peace in Colombia. I support the efforts being made by the present government, carried out by holding dialogues. However, to continue doing this, it is necessary to have an immediate ceasefire and, I repeat, to release all persons held against their will.

The economy: although I support the process of opening up the economy, I think that it should be done in a general and not a limited way. If this is not done, the country will not be able to compete. We need clearer policies on agricultural matters, export stimulation, and support for the private sector if there is to be any significant job creation.

System of justice: to have justice, it is not just a matter of applying the letter of the law. We should also offer alternative solutions for the problems facing the Colombian people. Let the farmers have access to the countryside; let the government and businessmen find ways of ensuring employment; and let the people have access to health services. That is justice.

Ernesto Samper Pizano
Name: Ernesto Samper Pizano
Age: 43
Political affiliation: Liberal
Marital status: Married
Present (or previous) position: Colombian ambassador to Spain
Other positions: Member of the City Council of Bogota, minister of development

Narcotics trafficking: the war against the narcotics traffic must be internationalized. Either the consuming countries should take effective action to reduce their levels of consumption or the supply will shift to other places, after we have incurred greater institutional and personal costs.

Guerrilla activity: if dialogues are to be viable, they should be regionalized. We should expand rehabilitation programs and create more favorable living conditions in the areas affected by violence. It will be necessary to strengthen our ability to deliver a military response to the guerrillas and to improve our intelligence services, as essential features of a policy of peace, complemented by a humanization of the war.

The economy: we should establish a modern state and economic system which are dynamic and efficient and which will make it possible to reduce unemployment, raise real income, and provide basic services to all citizens. The design of the strategy of development and the management of economic policy is based on these social priorities.

System of justice: it will be necessary to restore the role of judges and improve the system of justice from the administrative point of view. The problem facing us will not be resolved merely by changing the legal codes or by buying bulletproof vests but by considering and developing policies with a clear, ideological foundation. Politics should be taken out of the system of justice, and it should be decentralized. (Taken from his book, "Colombia sale adelante!" [Colombia Moves Forward!]). [passage omitted]

* Hommes Blames Business Sector for Inflation

* Explains Charge

93SM0195A Santa Fe de Bogota EL ESPECTADOR in Spanish 4 Mar 93 p 9A

[Text] Surprisingly, Minister of Finance Rudolf Hommes has blamed the country's businessmen for the 6.6 percent inflationary rise in the first two months of this year.

In his opinion, the industrialists have now lost the fear of competition provoked by the more open economic approach, and prices are once again beginning to rise rapidly.

However, he admitted that the government is also to blame for the inflationary upsurge, because public service rates are exerting extreme pressure on the cost of living for Colombian citizens.

He explained that this is why he is going to review what is happening with the public service bodies, warning that until they are subjected to a financial housecleaning, it will be very difficult to limit the increase in the amounts billed.

Last year, for example, the rates for electricity, telephone service, and drinking water went up more than 37 percent overall, or in other words, more than the rate of inflation reported for 1992.

"I am very concerned about inflation, and we are going to look into what is happening. For the present, we have noted that the prices of industrial goods are rising rapidly," this official commented.

However, the minister dismissed the possibility that special measures will be adopted to deal with the upsurge in inflation, which is not supposed to increase beyond 22 percent in 1993.

The board of directors of the Bank of the Republic, the body now responsible for the development of inflation, is not prepared to adopt any measures to control inflation either. This is because the bank believes that any sudden action on this front might traumatize production. This would work against achieving the goal for economic growth, which is estimated at between 4 and 5 percent for this year.

It is hoped that with the more open approach, that is to say with the arrival of new products on the domestic market, the prices of domestic industrial goods will be rationalized.

Everything seems to indicate that businessmen have now adapted to the new system, and, being familiar with the terrain, are adjusting prices. This meant inflationary rates of more than three percent in January and February.

The fact that the Gaviria administration has continued to gain control over inflation cannot be ignored, since it has succeeded in reducing the rate from 29 percent to 24.71 percent.

In February of 1991, the rate of inflation for the whole of the year reached 31.65 percent. By that same date in 1992, it was down to 27.35 percent, and it is now down to 24.71 percent.

In order to make some contribution to offsetting the increase in prices, the government has decided to reduce public expenditures substantially in the first half of the year.

Some businesses and public entities have even postponed investments of a nonpriority nature, investing the funds in bonds issued by the state instead.

The directors of the issuing agency are persuaded that it is possible to reduce the increase in living costs to 22 percent by next December.

* Business Sector Denies Blame

93SM0195B Santa Fe de Bogota EL TIEMPO in Spanish 5 Mar 93 p 11A

[Text] Businessmen have emphatically denied that they are responsible for the increase in living costs in February, as claimed by Minister of Finance Rudolf Hommes on Wednesday.

The statements made by this official caused concern among industrialists because they believe they should not be held up to public ridicule on this issue.

In explaining the increase of 3.25 percent in inflation seen in February, Hommes asserted that the businessmen are to blame.

He said that as they have now lost their fear of the open economic approach, they have decided to raise the prices of their products significantly.

The trade-union leaders consulted by EL TIEMPO agreed that the government bears major responsibility for the inflationary development, because major increases in the cost of the services provided by the state were seen in the first two months of this year.

In addition, they pointed out that an increase in the gasoline price like that agreed upon in December has traditionally launched an upward movement.

"Untrue," Says ANDI

According to Carlos Arturo Angel, the president of the National Association of Industrialists (ANDI), the industrialists have in recent months been faced with dwindling demand, so that it is not possible for them to increase their prices to an unrealistic extent.

This trade-union leader said that the reason for inflation should be sought instead in the increases imposed for state services, such as fuels and tolls, which lead to an immediate increase in prices throughout the economy.

ANALDEX President's Denial

Jorge Ramirez Ocampo, the president of the National Association of Exporters (ANALDEX), says it is obvious that since the producer price index (IPP) revealed such a small increase in February, it is not the businessmen who are responsible for the substantial rise in living costs.

According to this index, which is prepared by the Bank of the Republic, the increase for finished consumer goods in February was 1.5 percent, as compared to 3.1 percent in February of 1992. This shows that there was a more favorable development in the prices obtained by the producer at the factory in 1993.

"Unfair," FEDEMETAL Says

According to Luis Gustavo Florez, the president of the Colombian Federation of Metal Industries (FEDEMETAL), businessmen have not forgotten about the open economic approach, because with customs rates averaging 9 percent for industry, it is impossible to increase prices above that percentage without losing market customers.

This trade-union leader called it unfair for the government to push the industrialists to the wall at a time when it is essential to improve the dialogue, particularly if it is noted that the harshest effects of the open economic approach are beginning to be felt.

FENALCO Blames Government

Sabas Pretelt de la Vega, the president of the National Federation of Businessmen (FENALCO), expressed the view that the government bears a large part of the responsibility for the increase in living costs, because the cost of many of the goods and services for which it is responsible have increased more than the rate of inflation.

He also said that the efforts made by the government to control public expenditures have been minimal, and that until there is determination to attack on this front, it will become more difficult, as each day passes, to regulate the currency in circulation and to slow inflation.

ACOLFA Notes Other Factors

In the opinion of Camilo Llinas, the president of the Colombian Association of Auto Parts Manufacturers (ACOLFA), blaming just the businessmen is an overly hasty and unjustified conclusion. In the early months of

the year, a high level of inflation always develops—because of the increases in the prices of public services, among other factors.

Moreover, the minister cannot say that the open approach is not working, because this is a process that is continuing to function, just as it did at the end of the year.

* Additional Business Response

93SM0195C Santa Fe de Bogota EL ESPECTADOR in Spanish 5 Mar 93 p 9A

[Text] The unions of workers in industry and trade are denying the charge made against them by Minister of Finance Rudolf Hommes that businesses are pushing consumer prices upward.

Meanwhile, national productive activity showed a definite decline during the first month of 1993, according to the ANDI [National Association of Industrialists] poll.

The industries surveyed reported increases in production well below those noted a year ago.

However, Sabas Pretelt, Luis Gustavo Florez, and Carlos Arturo Angel, the presidents of the FENALCO [National Federation of Businessmen], FEDEMETAL [Colombian Federation of Metal Industries], and ANDI, respectively, described the statements by the minister of finance as ill-timed.

"They give a discouraging signal to those of us who are working to improve productivity," one of these businessmen commented.

A chart based on the ANDI survey on the annual variation in the consumer price index shows that the goods provided by the state lead in terms of increases, while industrial goods, on the contrary, can be seen to have less effect on inflation. This is not the first time there has been this kind of back-and-forth between the minister of finance and the industrialists regarding inflationary problems.

According to the president of the FENALCO, Hommes is acting out the fable of the wolf, because he has become accustomed to reiterating his little lies.

The FENALCO official said that the government statistics are losing credibility, because the main factors seen in the price increases have been the rising cost of public services and the 14 percent that has to be paid for the VAT [value added tax]. "And in addition, public expenditures continue to be excessive."

The president of the FEDEMETAL, for his part, agreed with some of the statements made by Sabas. And he said that industry has not raised prices above the level of the average rate of foreign customs duties, in other words between 8 and 9 percent. "It is unfair to blame the industrialists for the errors that are resulting precisely from the decisions made by the state," he added.

He said that the statements made by Hommes are inconsistent, because "they give a discouraging signal at a time when the industrialists are making every effort to improve their productivity. It is now that one yearns for concerted action, in order to avoid this type of situation."

The ANDI industrial survey for January showed that for that month, 46.4 percent of the businesses questioned reported production increases, while 34 percent reported declines. These percentages were 59.7 percent and 27.5 percent, respectively, for January 1992.

Of the companies questioned, 46.4 percent reported increased sales, while 40.5 percent reported declines for January of this year. The percentages were 59.4 percent and 29.6 percent, respectively, for January 1992. The ANDI said that this slowdown is explained in part by the fewer labor days worked in the first month of this year as compared to the figure for January of last year.

The demand level, at 20.7 percent, was reported as the leading problem. Others include uncertainty, transportation and ports, the rationing of electricity, the high cost of supplies, the slow portfolio turnover, the open economic approach, and the lack of working capital.

An excellent dynamic could be seen in the development of orders, as 85.2 percent of the firms reported the level as normal or high. This situation suggests that in the coming months, industrial activity may benefit from a recovery of the dynamic movement seen at the end of 1992.

* Ex-Guerrillas Describe Harassment, Obstacles

93SM0199A Santa Fe de Bogota EL TIEMPO in Spanish 7 Mar 93 p 28

[Article by Orlando Leon Restrepo: "'We Are Scared But We Remain Steadfast....'"]

[Text] Apartado—As dusk descends, the leaves of the shrubs surrounding the children's park in the Pueblo Nuevo section of Apartado, sway gently in the breeze.

There, a group of former fighters of the EPL [Popular Liberation Army] chat under the shade of the trees. Seated in a wooden chair, apart from the others, is Jose Felipe Fuentes, whose attention is centered on a group of children as they play and sing nursery songs. Among them are his two sons Luz Mirely and Raul Felipe. He, his wife Beatriz, and their two children have had to acclimate to a new life in Apartado.

After suffering the harassment, intimidation, and even death threats by members of Caraballo's group of guerrillas, Fuentes—presently a town councillor and member of the Hope, Peace, and Freedom movement in San Pedro de Uraba—had to flee from his home in San Jose de Mulatos, in Turbo, five months ago, together with his family, a brother, a cousin, and two nephews.

"There," Fuentes recounts, "I had a little parcel of land and a house. I learned that they were going to kill me, and preferred to leave the zone. Caraballo's men gave me three options: I could stay and work with Caraballo, or I could leave the zone; otherwise, they would assassinate me. I remained there a while, but then they began

provoking me in my home. They would fire shots into the air, enter the rooms in my home, and take away whatever they could find."

With eyes still glued on the children in the park, Fuentes continued his account. "Caraballo's men started a campaign of vilification in the villages, telling the people that I was working together with the Army and with paramilitary groups, so as to justify my assassination, in the minds of the community."

Today, two years after the signing of the peace agreements with the government, Fuentes, like 513 other former EPL fighters in Uraba, faces a terrible enemy: The group made up of some of their former guerrilla comrades-in-arms, which has taken on a sadistic attitude toward them and, together with other guerrilla groups in the zone and their political allies, appear bent on exterminating the "Hopefuls."

Since the start of the peace process, more than 100 murders have been attributed to the Caraballo group (the fifth front of the FARC [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia]) and the zone's Bolivarian militias (also part of the FARC). For the most part, their victims have been farm workers and members of the Hope movement. This year, the extermination drive has flared up again.

In February alone, the Caraballo group murdered 21 members of the EPL, including Jesus Alirio Guevara, vice president of the Sintrainagro union, whose membership includes 12,000 banana plantation workers, and Pedro German, an Apartado town councillor.

Uraba's rehabilitated former guerrillas feel that the security forces are insufficient to contain the wave of murders. Although the former guerrillas know that it is difficult to control a zone like Uraba, they feel that the intelligence forces need to be strengthened: "Sixteen guards, two cars, and a few bulletproof vests are not enough."

These deficiencies in the security of the rehabilitated are starkly reflected in the creation of armed groups called Comandos Populares [People's Units], made up of an indeterminate number of former guerrillas, to respond to the Caraballo group's actions. "They are not, strictly speaking, an organization. Their actions are circumstantially driven. They never engage in operations or actions intended to terrify."

Government Promises

Violence is not the only problem being confronted by the members of the new political movement. Slowness of fulfillment of the promises made by the government is also contributing to the Hopefuls' growing loss of faith in the peace process.

Teodoro Paz, vice president of the Hope, Peace, and Freedom movement in Uraba, asserts that "owing to the slow pace of implementation of the social and job programs, the rehabilitated former guerrillas have lost their faith in the process. At least 30 demobilized former guerrillas have taken up arms again and returned to the hills."

The rehabilitated acknowledge that the signing of the agreements has produced changes in the zone. These have included the deactivation of paramilitarism, improvement of the labor climate, and a relative climate of peace that lasted a few months. But they consider that, as to its promises, the government has fallen behind along the way.

The rehabilitation process is being hampered by excessive bureaucracy. "Before rehabilitated applicants can receive approval of an economic project," says Diaz, "the project must clear five government agencies. The red tape has prevented them from starting a productive life."

Applications are currently on file for eight joint economic projects and 482 individual economic projects in Uraba. Joint projects include such things as the creation of a pharmacy, a fishing unit, a bag factory, an upholstery factory, a transport cooperative, and a banana plantation. Individual micro-enterprise projects include such things as small banana-growing units and cattle farms. But most of these projects are stymied by bureaucratic red tape, and by the lack of advisory assistance and technical expertise.

As if the foregoing were not enough, the absence of a government policy on marketing and commercialization, and the lack of incentives and subsidies to aid the small agricultural entrepreneur in the zone are paving the way to a thunderous failure of this program. Diaz says that, in addition, "refinancing is lacking and there is no government support in the form of economic guarantees for projects."

Despite the foregoing obstacles and shortcomings, the rehabilitated do acknowledge that the government has delivered on its promise of an individual subsidy of 75,000 pesos for six months, and a few loans for 2 million pesos for the creation of business firms.

But it is the social aspects of rehabilitation that are the hardest to measure and the ones with the most bearing on the problem of violence. "Neither the state nor society prepared themselves to deal with the problem of the former guerrillas," says Diaz.

"We have no institutional niche. We are fifth-class citizens, and mechanisms are nonexistent for our participation in the community's social programs. Moreover, the political parties in the local municipal administrations in Uraba deny us support and the opportunity to serve the community at the public administration level."

The criticisms voiced by the rehabilitated also take aim at the political points of the pact signed with the government. "The government is giving little publicity to the peace process. The people need to be informed on the progress of the process. That too is part of the process itself," asserts the leader of the EPL.

Violence is not the sole problem of the peace process. There is also the wear and tear and attrition. "For the former guerrilla, who understands nothing about complex bureaucratic red tape, his demobilization has served only to allow him to see his companions being murdered and to consider himself a potential victim. We are afraid, but generally speaking, we do not regret having laid down our arms."

[Box, p 28]

From Guerrilla to Micro-Entrepreneur

Medellin—In a garage near the main street of Apartado, Jorge Guerrero, 35, works in his saddlery shop. He never thought he could live so quietly, and dedicate himself to the trade he learned as a youngster in Timbio (Cauca).

Life on the old EPL's Jose Maria Alzate front shut out any thought of a normal life.

But since 1 March 1991, when he quit the military, Jorge has been the owner, chief of production, and worker in his shop. "This all began," he says, "while we were concentrated in Pueblo Nuevo, Necocli, through a corporation called Conideas. With them we investigated the upholstery market among the ranches, the prices, and the suppliers.

"I feel bad after having laid down my arms. Because of the murders of companions and the insecurity, and because this business is not getting off the ground. Frankly, I feel that laying down my arms was not worth the while. The process has not been what we thought it would be. I feel defrauded. But we are out of it, now, and we have to struggle on."

Ecuador

Authorities Warn of Increase in Drug Trafficking

PA0404232293 Mexico City NOTIMEX in Spanish 2050 GMT 4 Apr 93

[Text] Quito, 4 Apr (NOTIMEX)—It was officially announced on 4 April that the assets owned by the two largest drug-trafficking organizations that had been operating in Ecuador until recently are valued at more than $1 billion.

The National Council for the Control of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances [Consejo Nacional de Control de Substancias Estupefacientes y Psicotropicas—Consep] has warned about an increase in the illegal trafficking of drugs, which produces more than $15 million in profits for the country's traffickers.

Consep said this is only a preliminary estimate and that more precise information will be available once the inventories that follow the seizures are completed.

This fortune is owned by two drug-trafficking organizations, that of The Wise Men [Los Reyes Magos], whose bosses have been in prison since the dismantling of the band in June 1992; and the Red Punta Manta band, composed of Ecuadorans, Peruvians, Colombians, and Israelis. The dismantling of this band began a few days ago.

These two organizations, which have been viewed by the police as the largest in Ecuador, own large ranches in several regions of the country, residences, luxury vehicles, hotels, offices, and businesses.

In Guayaquil, Ecuador most populous city, the Red Punta Manta band, which comprises 14 smaller drug-trafficking groups, had large and modern facilities for storing drugs. This organization had turned Manta into a port for shipping drugs to the United States, Europe, and Israel. The group was dismantled as a result of an operation called "Costa," which covered the cities of Manta, Guayaquil, and Caraquez Bay, on the Ecuadoran coastline.

According to Interpol in Ecuador, in 1992 the authorities seized 4,027 kg of narcotics, of which 3,620 kg were cocaine.

The drugs seized in Ecuador in 1992 were worth more than $15.5 million (more than 30 billion sucres) on the international market. The Ecuadoran police have admitted that their drug seizures represent only a small portion of the drugs that move through the country. This means that the figures listed here represent only a small fraction of the amount of drugs and money that pass through the country in connection with the drug "business" in this small Andean country.

The Ecuadoran authorities have said, however, that this country's drug problem is still far from being on the same scale as that in neighboring Colombia and Peru.

Paraguay

Senate Urged To Reject Electoral Reform Bill

PY0204165793 Asuncion ABC COLOR in Spanish 2 Apr 93 p 12

[Editorial: "Senators Must Reconsider Change of Rules"]

[Text] The changes to the electoral law approved a few days ago in the Chamber of Deputies happened because of the power of one single bloc: the officialist bloc. This is commonly known as a "political" vote; that is, discussion on the advantages or disadvantages of the subject that is going to be voted on has no importance; the decision has already been made at the party headquarters. On this occasion all Colorado deputies—except for a few who voted against and some others who did not attend the session—approved the reform even though there were many powerful reasons not to do so.

In this case one must ask oneself: Why has the Colorado Party committed practically its whole bloc to this subject? What is the vital interest?

It is obvious that the main concern was not to improve the law and to make the election rules more appropriate

or easy to implement. No one believes that the lawmakers were all that concerned about improving the election control measures in order to strengthen democracy, or that they found out how to do so just 40 days before elections are held. Even the most naive can see that this would be completely unbelievable.

The truth is that the main advantage the officialist party hopes to obtain seems to be that explained by Colorado Deputy Duarte Torres who said that the requirement that poll watchers belong to the electoral district where they will exert their function is like a "death sentence for the National Encounter [EN]." Other Colorados confirmed this, saying that this new rule shatters the EN plan to assign poll watchers from Asuncion to electoral districts in the interior. In other words, the party sponsoring these last-minute reforms thinks it is placing an unsurmountable obstacle in the path of a contender by presuming that the EN does not have enough supporters who meet the requirements to become poll watchers, and in such emergency would not be able to cover the many balloting tables, mainly in the interior of the country.

However, could it be that those who conceived this mischief think that with the absence of their contender's poll watchers they will be able to absorb its votes? Or is it that they expect to convince the other poll watchers from the opposition to share the votes of those absent? Given the way changes to the electoral code are being handled, these suppositions are well founded.

Regrettably, from this we can only conclude that the virtues guiding many politicians in our country are not ethical or decent. Perhaps the morality of the Colorado Party is being undermined by excessive fear of defeat, and its leaders are experiencing a crisis of values. The truth is that the people, especially the youth, are not receiving from their congressmen a lesson in political honesty and integrity. These political leaders should not complain when the youth do not follow them.

It is doubtful that these last-minute changes to the electoral law will yield any advantage for the party that sponsors them; on the contrary, it discredits them. One would expect the senators to perceive with a clearer mind the benefits of leaving the election rules as they were so as to dispel ideas of immoral intentions which inspired the election changes.

National Encounter Criticizes Reform Bill

PY0204201693 Asuncion NOTICIAS in Spanish 2 Apr 93 p 2

[Excerpt] National Encounter Alliance leaders met yesterday with members of the OAS observers delegation. The former charged that the changes made in the Electoral Code are detrimental to the National Encounter. Marcelo Duarte, a National Encounter Central Committee member, said these changes represent a fraudulent plot to defraud the Paraguayan people. The leaders of this independent group pointed out that the president of the Republic must remove his Colorado Party banner and withdraw the bill [on Electoral Code changes] from Congress, or, at any rate, refrain from endorsing it when it is submitted to him.

After the meeting with the OAS observers at the OAS office, National Encounter Central Committee members said that during their talk they expressed to the OAS delegates the National Encounter's concern about the changes made in some Electoral Code articles, changes that now have been approved by the Chamber of Deputies.

Marcelo Duarte noted that this bill, which will be promulgated soon, represents the National Encounter's death certificate. Duarte said: "In addition, after the remarks made by Colorado Party President Blas N. Riquelme, Deputy Victor Hugo Sanchez, and Deputy Carlos Duarte Torres, it is obvious that they are concocting a huge fraudulent plot to defraud the Paraguayan people and prevent our movement from achieving a sure victory on 9 May."

Duarte added that, with the changes, the National Encounter will be confronted with the fact that the voters lists will be released on different dates, that is, the general voters lists 30 days before election day and the balloting-table voters lists 15 days before election day. He pointed out that, with this change, it will not be possible to check if the two voters lists are identical. The National Encounter politician noted that another inconvenience involves increasing the number of balloting table officials, including a mandatory clause that these officials must be from the balloting table's district. [passage omitted]

Laino: Other Candidates Represent 'Continuity'

PY0204215093 Asuncion ABC COLOR in Spanish 2 Apr 93 p 7

[Article by Juan Antonio Franco from Itapua]

[Text] Domingo Laino, Authentic Radical Liberal Party [PLRA] presidential candidate, reiterated that candidates Guillermo Caballero Vargas of the National Encounter Alliance and Juan Carlos Wasmosy of the Colorado Party represent continuity. "Both have Stroessnerist supporters," the PLRA candidate said of his adversaries in the 9 May elections.

Laino began a series of activities with PLRA leaders in a ceremony celebrated at the Heroes Square in Otano, Itapua Department. Laino was accompanied by Julio Oreggione, candidate for Itapua governorship; Benjamin Benitez, regional deputy candidate; Julio Garcete, Itapua Departmental Council candidate; and Franklin Boccia, who coordinates the PLRA electoral campaign.

In his speech, Laino emphasized that the two groups represent political continuity. One of them is headed by Wasmosy, who is supported by President Rodriguez. He said: "You have witnessed the conditions in which this Colorado Party candidate was elected. What guarantees can he give us that he will change society? He is the

representative of those who do not want changes in Paraguay. His project unquestionably represents continuity."

Commenting on the National Encounter Alliance candidate, Laino said: "There is another candidate who pretends to represent changes, although he is showing that he represents the same previous system." Laino said Caballero Vargas meets with Stroessner-supporting individuals in Asuncion. "It has been learned that they have held secret meetings, but in our country nothing remains secret. He says he will associate with anyone as long as he wins the presidency," Laino pointed out.

Regarding the Itaipu issue, Laino said Wasmosy does want to renegotiate the Itaipu treaty and says Paraguay would have no moral authority to do so. Laino emphasized: "He may not have it, but we have more than enough moral authority to do it."

"The other continuity candidate 'secretly' went to Brazil and now says he wants to review the treaty, but within the Common Market of the South [Mercosur] framework. We still do not know when Mercosur will become a reality. This means that, meanwhile, we cannot review the Itaipu treaty. This shows that he is a continuity candidate," Laino concluded.

Court Suspends Decree on Union Activities

PY0204211493 Asuncion NOTICIAS in Spanish 2 Apr 93 p 20

[Text] Through a resolution, the Supreme Court has suspended the implementation of Decree No. 16769. This controversial decree by the executive branch regulated the national labor unions' activities and forced most labor unions to elect new leaders through direct, free, and secret voting. The court resolution will be in effect until the Supreme Court declares the ruling unconstitutional as requested by lawyer Carlos Alberto Gonzalez, the legal representative for the United Labor Federation, CUT. The suspension ordered by the Supreme Court has caused a sigh of relief to labor union leaders since the decree compelled them to elect new authorities within a period of less than 60 days.

The decree was signed by President Rodriguez on 18 March. Employees immediately rejected it, while employers supported it.

Demonstrations in support and against the decree were staged during one week until the CUT and the CNT [Workers National Coordinating Board] asked the Supreme Court to declare it unconstitutional. Labor union leaders regard the decree's suspension as the first victory in the legal struggle against the executive branch. It is likely that the Supreme Court will declare the decree unconstitutional.

Local Cocaine Route Reportedly Discovered

PY0204221193 Asuncion NOTICIAS in Spanish 2 Apr 93 p 50

[Text] The Pedro Juan Caballero cartel not only sends huge shipments of cocaine to the United States, Europe, and Asia, but, as is normal, it also reserves some of the drug as samples and for the creation of local consumption markets.

In a recent news conference, Marcial Samaniego (executive secretary of the National Antidrugs Secretariat, Senad), said: "A country that serves as a route for drug trafficking in the end becomes a consumption market." He explained that various official and non-official organizations under Senad's sponsorship are carrying out drug prevention operations.

The discovery of small quantities of cocaine in various parts of the country has led authorities to think drug traffickers have established a local route for cocaine trafficking to the major consumer markets. This suspicion was confirmed a few days after Dinar [National Narcotics Directorate] intelligence personnel went to Capitan Bado and Pedro Juan Caballero townships to investigate the presence of "narcoguerillas" carrying weapons, and the probable shipment of hundreds of kilograms of cocaine and marijuana to Sao Paulo (Brazil) and then to Europe, Japan, and the United States.

Meanwhile, personnel from the Special Command Force, Dinar, and Border Detachment No. 2, based in Capitan Bado, are conducting "Operation Fall Duck" in the Cerro Cuatia area.

The forces yesterday destroyed new marijuana plantations, which added to the 27 hectares burned early this week.

Another brigade will go to the area tomorrow to destroy the marijuana "superplants" in Cerro Cuatia.

Peru

Armed Forces Reaffirm Allegiance to Fujimori

PA0504012593 Lima Radio Programas del Peru Network in Spanish 0017 GMT 5 Apr 93

[Text] One year after the 5 April events, the Armed Forces and National Police have reiterated their support for President Alberto Fujimori.

Defense Minister Victor Malca Villanueva underlined the commitment to continue to work for the country's pacification.

[Begin Malca recording] As defense minister and in the name of the interior minister, I was the speaker at a ceremony to commemorate the first anniversary of the day on which our Armed Forces and the National Police took the opportunity to support you, President Fujimori, firmly and determinedly, in your decision to initiate a historic reformation process aimed at reconstructing our country and laying a sound foundation for the development and prosperity we have always desired. Mr. Fujimori, we hereby express our absolute support and loyalty to you personally and as commander in chief of the Armed Forces and the National Police. We hereby affirm our commitment to continue to carry out any missions entrusted to us, professionally and efficiently, as part of

the pacification strategy that you initiated, in complete respect for human rights. [end recording]

During the commemoration of the first anniversary of the measures taken on 5 April 1992, General Nicolas Hermosa Rios, chief of the Joint Staff and commander of the Army, confirmed his allegiance to President Fujimori. He said that reason and national aspiration marked the need for a government action in order for the state to adapt itself to the new situation and overcome the economic, social, and political crisis that threatened Peruvian society. On the fight on subversion, Hermosa Rios said that, thanks to civic action programs, more than 10,000 terrorist criminals and over 4,300 Shining Path and MRTA [Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement] leaders have been captured.

Finally, Hermosa Rios noted that terrorism is not yet over but that the country should look confidently to the Armed Forces and the National Police, which are committed to pacifying the national territory.

President Fujimori attended the ceremony at the Army headquarters. In his speech, Fujimori said Peru will no longer be a country ravaged by terrorism but will become less dangerous.

[Begin Fujimori recording] Let there be no doubt that what we did was to defend Peru and was completely right. I am sure that history will acknowledge our decision and our foresight, as well as our ability to do justice to those Andean peoples who have been subjugated for 500 years, as well as to defeat backwardness, misery, and underdevelopment. We can assert, without a shadow of a doubt, that Peru is no longer Latin America's most dangerous country, devastated by terrorism. In a short time, Peru will be a far less dangerous country, even less than a number of European countries, which are still plagued by subversives. [end recording]

Military Court Issues Final Verdict on Coupists

PA0404042693 Lima Global de Television Network in Spanish 0312 GMT 4 Apr 93

[Text] On the afternoon of 3 April the Supreme Council of Military Justice Appeals Court issued the final verdict in the cases of the officers implicated in the 13 November coup attempt. The appeals court issued an official communique wherein it changed the court martial sentences to six officer and upheld the release of eight officers and the sentences given to 19 officers. Following are the final verdicts:

General Jaime Salinas Sedo—eight-year sentence upheld, but civil fine reduced from 500,000 soles to 250,000 soles.
Gen. Jose Pastor Vives—sentence reduced from four to three years.
Gen. Manuel Obando Salas—sentence increased from seven to eight years and civil fine increased from 50,000 to 60,000 new soles.
Colonel Wilder Sanchez—one-year sentence upheld.
Col. Victor Granda Guzman—sentence increased from 18 months to three years in prison.
Col. Jaime Gutierrez—sentence reduced from two years to one year in prison.

Vice Admiral Augusto Vargas Prada's sentence has been withheld until he is found or surrenders to justice.

It has not been confirmed, however, if the officers will remain at the Real Felipe base or will be transferred to another military base now that the final verdict has been issued.

[Begin Javier Valle, Salinas' defense attorney, recording] This verdict is completely illegal. First, because the evidence presented by the defense at the lower court, that is at the court martial, was not taken into account. Second, in my specific case, because the exception action was not taken into account. The exception was presented to show that the case did not have any legal contents and should be filed. We will present an appeal. The military justice law does not accept such an appeal but the Constitution and the Judicial Branch bylaws do. There have been procedural errors in the case. [words indistinct] magistrates and must be reconsidered by the Supreme Court. [end recording]

Court Gives Life Sentence to MRTA Leaders

PA0404034093 Lima Global de Television Network in Spanish 0100 GMT 4 Apr 93

[Text] A faceless court at Yanamayo Prison on the afternoon of 3 April handed down a life imprisonment sentence for the crime of treason against the fatherland to Victor Polay Campos and Peter Cardenas, top leaders of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement [MRTA]. The sentence against Polay and Cardenas is retroactive because the two men were already in prison months prior to 14 August 1992 when life imprisonment became effective in the Criminal Code.

The MRTA leader escaped from the Castro Castro Prison in July 1990 with 46 of his followers but was recaptured a little more than a year ago and incarcerated in Yanamayo Prison where some Shining Path leaders are also housed.

Abimael Guzman Transferred to New Prison

PA0304201793 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1820 GMT 3 Apr 93

[Excerpt] Lima, 3 Apr (EFE)—Abimael Guzman Reynoso, leader of the Maoist group Shining Path, was transferred on 3 April to a maximum security prison, to an "impenetrable" prison, as Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori described it two months ago.

Guzman was taken under strict security measures to the Naval Base of Callao, Lima's port, and placed in a prison built by the Peruvian Navy, which has been charged with guarding the Peruvian terrorist leader.

Guzman embarked at noon on a torpedo boat. He was wearing his striped prison uniform. He was placed in a cage and sat on a chair. The cage was surrounded by 30 heavily armed sailors, who had their faces covered by ski masks.

Guzman wore a life jacket and was free of the handcuffs he wore when he left the residence on San Lorenzo island, across from Callao, where he had been detained for six months.

The torpedo boat was escorted by a helicopter that flew over the boat during the trip and by two armed boats.

After sailing for 30 minutes, Guzman arrived at the Navy dock. The same security measures were implemented at the dock for his arrival. Guzman was then taken to his new maximum security prison. [passage omitted]

Panel Discusses Limitations Imposed on Congress

PA0404024793 Lima Radio Programas del Peru Network in Spanish 1400 GMT 3 Apr 93

["Saturday Focus" program with unidentified moderator; Carlos Torres y Torres Lara, chairman of the Constitution Commission of the Democratic Constituent Congress, CCD; constitutional experts Alfredo Quispe Correa, Francisco Miro Quesada Rada, and Arturo Salazar—live or recorded]

[Excerpts] [Moderator] Welcome to our program. I want to start with the topic of the limitations imposed on the Congress by granting excessive powers, let us say, to the president. The possibility of closing the congress has been traditional with parliamentary governments, although not with presidential governments, such as this one. Isn't this a hybrid that will have negative consequences, Dr. Torres y Torres Lara?

[Torres] On the contrary, first of all thank you for inviting me to speak with outstanding constitutional experts, journalists, and the people in general. We are going to explain what must be done to improve what we are doing. I said to the contrary, because we must clear up some views first. These are the following: In reality, there is no presidential government in Peru, as is said constantly. A typical presidential government is that of the United States where the Congress cannot censure the ministers. That is an option. The Executive Branch then functions with total powers. In fact, there is no council of ministers. It is the president who has full executive powers, without Legislative Branch interference. We do not fall into that situation. Our congress and our cabinet members are renewed constantly, they risk being removed. That creates a constant instability.

The other extreme is the parliamentary government, which basically exists in Europe. There is a middle-of-the-road point where we are located: a modified presidential government. It is quite similar to the French model, although we are still far from that. In any event, we are nearing it, of course within our own experience. Why is this good? First, in a country such as ours, we must first define those areas on which there is agreement, rather than have the systematic confrontation of powers. This does not mean there will be no differences. It means that once a government program is defined in which both the Executive and Legislative Branches agree, there will be a complementary effort to carry it out, of course guarding differences. If this is not done, it is necessary for the people to decide. That is why the president's powers to dissolve the congress are expanded. His powers are expanded, I repeat, because now he can do so under certain conditions, but also under certain limitations.

First, he cannot dissolve the congress during the first or the last year. Second, he can only do it once during the five year term. If he does it one time, he must realize he cannot do so later. Third, he does not dissolve the congress totally, only partially, maintaining the permanent commission made up of approximately 25 percent of the congress members. Fourth, when he dissolves the congress, he must call elections, which must be held within a period of no longer than four months. If this is not done, the congress resumes its prior status.

There is a series of things that I would compare, not with presidential systems where that mechanism does not exist, of course. We don't have presidential systems here either. I wouldn't compare it with the European parliamentary systems either. I would compare it with the intermediate systems, such as the French model, which is the one that is closest to this formula. That is where I would pinpoint the debate on this issue. [passage omitted]

[Miro] Well, I believe that a balance of power is fundamental to any democracy. Now, in analyzing trends, not only norms, I must say that there is something that distresses me. Although there has not been a presidential system in Peru similar as the one in the United States, it is evident that there has always been a trend that can well favor the president of the Republic. If we start from this fact, and leave the trend on the side, and we empower the president of the Republic with powers to close down parliament, we are merely giving the Executive Branch more power than the Legislative Branch.

There is a central issue, however, about all of this that really troubles me. It is related to Article 30 of the Constitution that specifically refers to the dissolution of congress. The article reads: The Parliament will not be renewed if Congress is dissolved at midterm. There will be no dissolution if the Parliament is renewed. I believe the article is unambiguous. Also, there is no other way to revoke the parliamentary mandate. For many years, I have advocated direct democratic institutions that would grant greater power to the people and less to a central authority. The issue, of course, is a matter of legal interpretation. I believe there is a disagreement between Article 30 and Paragraph 17 of Article 2 of the proposed reforms to the Constitution. There is no other way to revoke the parliamentary mandate. If the proposal is accepted, the people will not be able to revoke parliamentarians because the Congress was already renewed at midterm. Technically, this is called indirect revocation. Evidently, the topic calls for reflection. I believe the commission should study it again because the articles contradict each other. This is a typical case of an interpretation of the law. [passage omitted]

[Miro] I merely wanted to make a brief comment, since we are talking about certain situations abroad, such as

the situation in France. Suppose it is established the president can close Congress and call elections. This, then, is a way to consult the people.

[Torres] That is correct.

[Miro] And here is my question, why cannot the congress do the same? That is to say, let us seek a balance of powers, as has happened in Russia. What did Yeltsin do? To be perfectly honest, I am not familiar with the current Russian constitutional structure. I think it is undergoing a reform, but it does have the referendum system, in fact, the Soviet Union had a mechanism of consultation. It is now more pristine or has a more democratic structure. Yeltsin calls a referendum, and the parliament does the same. Then there are two referendums, something that is not all that usual. The Uruguayan Constitution makes it possible to establish those mechanisms of consultation. There can be two or even three consultations in a single regime.

The question, then, that I would like to ask Dr. Torres is why not weigh that possibility? If the president can call a referendum, why not the parliament? The idea is always to try to find a symmetry between the branches to reach a balance that may not be perfect but will make it possible to maintain the balance of power, something that is the foundation of the rule of law.

[Torres] I see no problem. We have approved a bill creating the referendum system. We will need a referendum law to establish the conditions under which it must be held. In essence, the clear idea is to establish the means to prevent extreme confrontations, make it possible to join efforts, and see our own situation. For those who think we are doing something unusual, I would simply tell them that the reference points are found in the French case, for instance. There, the situation is very clear, and the parliament has greater powers than the president in Peru. For that reason I admit, in fact, I will promote the idea of a referendum starting ....

[Miro, interrupting] Thank you for promoting it. [laughter]

[Moderator] There are several ideas that are being gathered here.

[Torres] Most of the ideas come from Peruvian constitutional experts.

[Miro] It is a good idea to promote them, but they must be thought out in both cases.

[Moderator] That is what the "Saturday Focus" program hopes to contribute. Dr. Quispe.

[Quispe] To dispel any doubt the listeners may have, I would like to say briefly that the Peruvian Constitution states that the prime minister is to inform the congress about the government's general policy, but the Congress does not cast a vote of confidence or censure. For that reason, it does not mean the majority in the Congress will agree with the political or economic policy the cabinet will follow. Second, I think references to institutions are omitted. The extended government of the president in France has also come under criticism, as some people feel the president is a kind of emperor who stays on for more than five years. I think we must keep in mind the weight of public opinion when talking about France and the United States, because that constitutes an effective control on power.

Here the institutions come come under attack or, to use the correct term, could come under attack or are dissolved. The veto right exists. The Council of Ministers settles some controversies with the Legislative Branch, and the Legislative Branch is dissolved. There is no guarantee the new leadership will really settle the conflict, since it can maintain it. On top of that, public opinion has no recognized weight. In the United States, for example, as Arturo Salazar said, public opinion has prevented someone who has broken the law from being appointed attorney general. In this country, however, the weight of public opinion is nil.

The tax payers' complaints regarding the tax on fifth category income, which some have described as confiscation, have gone unheard by the authorities. They have not tried to make corrections that will do justice to the people affected by this tax. For that reason, I believe the situations are different. The United States and France are democracies that are more consolidated where public opinion exerts a great control on power, something that unfortunately is not the case in our country. We must, therefore, strengthen the democratic system and institutions. We must forget about saviors and foster for the future a regime that will guarantee to all Peruvians that the system of freedoms will be assured. [passage omitted]

[Moderator] I wish to refer again to some of the issues debated over the past week or weeks by the CCD Constitution Commission. I want our guests to comment on the presidential power to approve parts of a law. Is a law not a coherent whole? Should this coherence not be maintained? Is the juridical status of a norm not violated by giving the president the power to veto and also approve or promulgate part of a law? Dr. Quispe Correa, what is your opinion?

[Quispe] Yes, I think it was good to give the government the power to veto or object to [observar] part of a law because this is a partial, conditioned, and temporary objection [observarla]. The negative aspect is that the government is empowered to promulgate the part of a law with which it does agree. As was noted, this breaks the coherence and consistency that should characterize all bills. A law is also subjected to ideological aspects; to certain economic and philosophical concessions. As a result, a law cannot be fractioned.

Moreover, this gives the government the power to decide instead of allowing the CCD to settle the veto problem as the current Constitution mandates. The current Constitution states that when there are objections [observada] to a law, that law is returned to the Congress, and should the Congress persist with it, this law would be kept unchanged to ensure a balance and control of power.

The new concept breaks this mechanism and the government is empowered to choose what it will veto and what

it will promulgate. An article in the magazine you are holding, which was written by Alberto Borea, a prominent professor and constitutional expert, who is unfortunately in exile, wonders: What would have happened if the president had the power to object to [observar] the norms he disagreed with and had promulgated other norms with regard to the bank nationalization law approved by the Parliament and thus made all private banks part of the public sector?

I think this example alone should be cause for reflection because a constitution is not designed to suit a person but to suit institutions. It could be the current ruler is a very honest, pragmatic, and capable person who will exercise these powers with great honesty and good criteria. We do not know what might happen in the future. We do not know what abuses this could produce.

As a result, I think this power should be reviewed. I think we should revert to the previous system, which I think was much safer, because, after all, the Parliament has two advantages over the Executive Branch. First, the Parliament is pluralistic and almost the entire spectrum of society is represented. Second, its debates are public and reported by the media. In contrast, Council of Minister's meetings are secret because one does not have access to the minutes of its sessions until many years later and not all arguments are represented.

In sum, we should revert to the previous mechanism in the case of a conflict regarding the veto of a total, partial, temporary, or conditional law. The Congress should settle this issue and the president should have no power to promulgate parts of a law. [passage omitted]

[Quispe] We have here two things that must be stated clearly. First, the established rules of the game were as follows: The people should be consulted with on the result of the CCD work, namely the constitution, or it should be submitted to a referendum. It was to be approved: yes or no. I mean the whole constitution, not parts or chapters, not ideas or ideologies. Those were the rules of the game. Second, I think the constitution must establish under which cases a referendum can be held. We must not let a law establish those cases. The law on a referendum is a procedural law. It is a constitutional procedural law. It will establish the procedures for the consultation. In my opinion, the constitution must state: A referendum will be held, for example, to define the government regime. A referendum will be held on the amendments to the constitution, or some other amendment, and so many signatures will be required. It must be based on specific points to offer a guarantee to the people that future presidents will not change the rules of the game with the referendum law. [passage omitted]

[Torres] Regarding Mr. Quispe's views, I feel the referendum law must also mention topics that are excluded or cannot be consulted in a referendum, such as tax topics or human rights topics. I am certain we agree on this. As for what must be done, I have given my personal opinion. The general policy we are following was contained in the initial law that said we would draft a constitution and submit it to a referendum. There are different possibilities from the start. I agree fully with the view on public opinion. We are not fully informed on what is happening. We pay great attention to the writings of Arturo Salazar and listen to his views and begin to have an opinion of what is happening in Peru. In fact, nobody knows what is happening, right? We are trying to be as objective as possible to draft laws and a constitution based on our situation. The country is undergoing profound changes, but we have certain fundamental elements.

A new society is being developed with a more mestizo and integrated personality than what we had before. We are overcoming segregation. We have a veritable revolution of small-scale businessmen. That is a fundamental point. Second, we have a country in a crisis, with an internal war. Profound disarray and internal imbalance exist. That is what we must consider, and we must legislate within that reality.

[Miro] Although I do not wish to make a political advertisement, I think Peru is closer to itself than before. Let me explain in what respect.

[Moderator] Please be as brief as possible because we are running out of time.

[Miro] I will be very brief. I think the changes society is experiencing are fundamental. When we talk of a consultation with the people, there is disinformation in terms of formal political information. The people, however, create their own real mechanisms. During the course of an investigation, I was able to see how the people create institutions of direct democracy in Huancay and Villa El Salvador, although that later got sidetracked. The people create their own mechanisms and institutions. This generates a culture in an anthropological sense. [passage omitted]

[Torres] I first want to thank this program, listeners, and the members of this panel for the opinions we are gathering. We will improve those aspects we have seen that need improvement. To add to Mr. Quispe's remarks, we must strengthen our institutions, but not strengthen bad unions, bad political parties, and bad institutions. We must strengthen political parties on a new democratic path. The political parties must have greater participation; their actions must be more honest. We must have better unions, not unions that are politicized but unions that defend the true interests of the workers. We need to create a country with solid structures, where order, morality, and progress exist. That is what we need to do.

[Miro] To determine how a political party is good or bad would take a very long sociological study.

[Moderator] Perhaps, it would be best to listen to the voice of the electorate. The people will determine in the elections what political party is good or bad.

[Miro] That is not just a qualitative but a quantitative matter. [passage omitted]

Uruguay

Lacalle Orders Commanders in Chief To Make 'Critical' Evaluation

PY0204014993 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2123 GMT 1 Apr 93

[Text] Montevideo, 1 Apr (EFE)—Official spokespersons announced today that Uruguayan President Luis Alberto Lacalle has ordered the Armed Forces commanders in chief to make a critical evaluation to implement an internal reform to make the Armed Forces more efficient.

The Uruguayan president, who is the Armed Forces supreme commander under the Constitution, met this week with a group of 140 officers from the three services to give his reform plans.

Lacalle explained to the military officers that taking into account the social, political, and economic transformations within the world and regional spheres, the government wishes to reaffirm the Armed Forces' role and the new concepts of efficacy and efficiency.

Uruguay is a small country, 180,000 square km, located between two large countries, Argentina and Brazil, and the current integration process the region is experiencing with the creation of the Common Market of the South appears to have removed the danger of an armed conflict with its neighbors.

Opposition groups have called on several occasions for a reduction of men in the Armed Forces and using the money that is saved to improve equipment and salaries.

During his meeting with the officers, Lacalle said that "we will not transform the Armed Forces into a national guard or a mere guardian force."

The planning of operations for maintaining internal order in case the Executive Branch believes it is necessary and the defining of tasks in peace time that will support Uruguay's economic and social development were among the orders Lacalle gave to the Army, Navy, and Air Force commanders.

Economy Minister on Collective Bargaining, Wages

PY0104171093 Montevideo Radio El Espectador Network in Spanish 0930 GMT 1 Apr 93

[Text] Economy Minister Dr. Ignacio De Posadas has said the government will no longer participate in setting private wage levels or establish guidelines for any sector because it believes that direct bargaining has achieved good results.

De Posadas discussed the situation of public sector wages. He said that on the basis of the increases granted in January and March, together with those announced for April, public sector wages will be increased by an average of 45 percent. He described this increase as huge.

Discussing the program to encourage public servants to move to the private sector, De Posadas said he met several times with international organizations, seeking to promote this program.

Concerning public servants, De Posadas said wages will inevitably be low under any government as long as this system, which involves retirement-strapped wages and a large number of public servants, continues.

Minister Ignacio De Posadas believes the Uruguayan economic situation is under control. He forecast that, during the remainder of this administration, there will be adverse changes in the foreign debt situation. He emphasized that his proposal to reduce the payroll of public servants and to approve laws to finance this year's special expenditures will benefit the winners of the next elections more than this government.

In an interview published today by the weekly BUSQUEDA, De Posadas said opposition sectors, although not openly expressing it, do not favor his idea of putting the house in order and of being willing to take the blame.

The economy minister said he trusts that the current guidelines will be maintained and that the elements required to maintain the fiscal balance will be secured.

Communications Satellite To Be Launched With Russia

PY0404015193 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2303 GMT 3 Apr 93

[Text] Montevideo, 3 Apr (EFE)—The first Russian-Uruguayan communications satellite, which will be operated from Montevideo, will be put into orbit in October, sources close to the manufacturing company reported today.

The satellite will be operated from a free zone and will be connected to television and radio stations on the continent. It also will help to establish an education network in Uruguay.

This program is supported by Uruguayan President Luis Alberto Lacalle. This is the first Latin American satellite project implemented with Russian cooperation.

The satellite will transmit programs to all Uruguayan educational centers. This is the first education network in Latin America that will be supported by Spanish professors.

The directors of the Intersax enterprise that will build and put the satellite into orbit met President Lacalle, whom they briefed on the project's details.

They noted the importance that can be assigned to the project with the creation of the Common Market of Knowledge that was approved by the culture ministers of OAS member countries after the meeting of the Interamerican Council for Education, Science, and Culture on 31 March in the Punta del Este summer resort.

Venezuela

Perez Denies Coup Rumors at News Conference

PA0304160193 Caracas EL NACIONAL in Spanish 26 Mar 93 p D-2

[Text] In a radio news conference held on 25 March President Carlos Andres Perez justified his government's rejection of an amnesty or pardon for the military involved in the 4 February and 27 November coup attempts, saying that such a measure would stimulate "crimes that are in fashion."

Punishment is not imposed on a criminal as vengeance, but to safeguard society. It would be absurd to think of an amnesty at this time, when these trials have not even ended. That would be grossly irresponsible and could threaten not only Venezuela, but all of Latin America, Perez said.

President Perez answered questions from reporters from the Venezuelan RCR radio network, London's BBC, and Colombia's Radio Cadena Nacional. The following is part of the interview.

[EL NACIONAL] Does your government have any reports on a third coup attempt?

[Perez] That is completely false. What happens is that in Venezuela, amid the turbulence caused by the magnitude of the reforms we have set in motion, the destabilizing groups we always find in our fatherland, the remains of the guerrillas of the 1960's and 1970's—which we defeated and which today do not have support from the USSR—continue to think about theories based on illusions and fallacies. They have started practicing a new kind of subversion. It is very subtle but, what with technological advances, has the same impact: rumors. We are constantly being inundated by rumors about coups. I have been in jail several times, I have been expelled from the country several times, and I have resigned several times. That happens frequently here, but it is absolutely false and the country no longer echoes those rumors. I ask my fellow Latin American countrymen to understand this reality, to realize that Venezuela has set a great example for Latin America, that if we fall here, the reality of democracy in our region will be in very serious jeopardy.

[EL NACIONAL] Were there irregularities in the handling of the $17 million from the secret allotment?

[Perez] First of all, it should be known that the president of the Republic does not handle any kind of budget; the president's ministers directly handle these matters. The prosecutor general has filed charges. He has the authority to do so. But anyone listening to me can be certain that this matter will be fully and clearly established in court. I am certain that it will be proven that there was nothing illegal or that could shame us in the handling of the secret allotment. Venezuela's democracy will be consolidated not only by preventing military coup perpetrators from seizing power, but also by demonstrating that public funds are managed honestly.

[EL NACIONAL] Would you resign to avoid facing a political trial?

[Perez] I must accept the country's judgment. We are living in a democratic country, where the courts are free to judge the president, and where the prosecutor general may request his trial. The fact that I could be the first person in Venezuela facing this possibility confirms that there is total democracy in our country. The president is not that almighty person who no one dares to question. I accept responsibility without any fear and I can even say I am happy, because I am a leader who has worked for my country with dedication and sense of service. I have also stirred up a lot of controversy.

[EL NACIONAL] Regardless of what the Supreme Court of Justice or the Congress' decision may be, some people believe you should resign or at least move up the elections. What do you think?

[Perez] My resignation or advancing the election date would simply weaken the Venezuelan Government. At this time, the government stands firmly behind the president's decision to carry out fundamental structural reforms to modernize the country. The president must keep his oath and continue moving forward. The important thing is that everything should be done in accordance with the Constitution.

[EL NACIONAL] At the end of the Inter-American Press Society meeting, some Venezuelan journalists complained about certain attitudes by the police and about the intervention of some military institutions in their activities, which they claim was aimed at intimidating journalists. With regard to those reports, do you believe the Venezuelan media can freely exercise its activities?

[Perez] That question makes me sad. I feel embarrassed and sad for the editors, because no journalist in Venezuela has said there is no freedom of the press and most editors would not say that. One of the editors that attended that press society meeting frankly and categorically contradicted the charges made by a newspaper editor who has always opposed my government and who has been a very negative factor for the democratic process we are going through.

Only one Venezuelan newspaper has reported what the press society approved, the rest of the newspapers have not published it because it is absolutely false.

[EL NACIONAL] What is your personal evaluation of your government work since 1989?

[Perez] In my annual speech to Congress, I made a very sincere and introspective evaluation of the Venezuelan situation. What I spoke about then was the reality of the difficult experience we have been facing. The balance of my government's work will be positive. It will contribute with valuable, but very difficult, experiences for Venezuela's future. It has been a very difficult government, a situation that I do not wish on any other compatriot who assumes the presidency. I will say, however, that I have fulfilled my duties with democratic convictions and have adhered to the Constitution. Unfortunately, I have had to pay the cost of our democratic reforms.

Defense Minister on Trial Against Judge

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[Text] Defense Minister General Ivan Dario Jimenez Sanchez said in Miraflores Palace on 1 April that the Military Court trial of Braulio Sanchez, judge of the 26th Criminal Court, should not lead to confrontations between the military and civilian courts.

Defense Minister Jimenez Sanchez believes these are legal matters that should be discussed in court and that, just as the criminal court judge acted according to what he believes is correct, the Military Court also believes it is acting correctly.

[Begin recording] [Jimenez] There are two positions here. He acted in a manner he believes is correct. He believes his action is correct. That is what I said. The Military Court also believes it is acting correctly. Both will maintain their positions, and they—or a trial—will decide who is right.

[Unidentified reporter] Is there a jurisdictional conflict here? Will a jurisdiction precedent be set in this case because it is a first in Venezuela? It is believed the judge that handed down the ruling was overstepping his duties.

[Jimenez] There is no jurisdictional conflict. No one has said there is a jurisdictional conflict. The Military Court claims Judge Braulio Sanchez has overstepped his duties and that is why it is requesting a trial. [end recording]

As for the proceedings that are being conducted in connection with the 4 February events, Jimenez said the proceedings will not be delayed because they have complied with all the legal mechanisms. Jimenez said the matter is currently being handled by the War Council.

Defense Minister Jimenez also said the Military Court has not ruled on the release of anyone. It has just issued arrest warrants against 43 officers, noncommissioned officers, and civilians. Within 20 to 30 days it must make an announcement regarding the rest of the alleged suspects.

Venezuela

Jagan on Regional, International Debt Relief

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[Text] Georgetown, Guyana, April 3, CANA—Guyana's President, Cheddi Jagan, said on Friday [2 April] he does not expect to get debt relief from Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados. But he maintained that Guyana, which has a U.S. 2 billion dollar foreign debt, cannot repay its debt to the two states in the near future.

"Obviously, we want to have discussions with them. We had made the point that we don't expect to get concessions from Trinidad and Barbados," President Jagan told reporters. He said Guyana was looking for debt relief from the international community, large international lending agencies, and Western governments backing its economic structural adjustment programme.

"What we have said is that we should approach this debt question not as individual countries, but as the Caribbean Community [Caricom] and approach the aid donors and our creditors so that some relief can be given to Trinidad and to Barbados and they in turn can then give us relief," President Jagan said.

He added: "We are not in a position now to pay more in debt relief. We have to look at other forms, of course, and we will have to look at areas of joint ventures between Guyana and Trinidad.... Guyana and Barbados." Guyana's share of profits from these joint ventures can be channelled towards liquidating the debt, he said.

He acknowledged the Trinidadian Government was not too interested in a proposed debt for equity swap and said when asked of Trinidad's options: "We will have to ask them to go to the People's National Congress [PNC] government because this government doesn't have much money." The PNC was defeated in last year's general election. Guyana owes Trinidad and Tobago more than U.S. 400 million dollars.

President Jagan also told reporters the rental and maintainence of buildings housing the Georgetown-based Caricom headquarters is "quite a hefty sum." He said this prompted his six-month old administration to request assistance from other regional governments to help foot the bill.

"We are asking now that that be put into the pot for the next time they are reviewing the budget to see whether that (cost) could be shared by all the countries as an expense," the U.S.-trained dental surgeon told reporters.

President Jagan spoke to newsmen after returning from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) meeting in Hamburg, Germany. He described the meeting as "extremely useful" and said it gave him the opportunity to hold discussions with 17 delegations.